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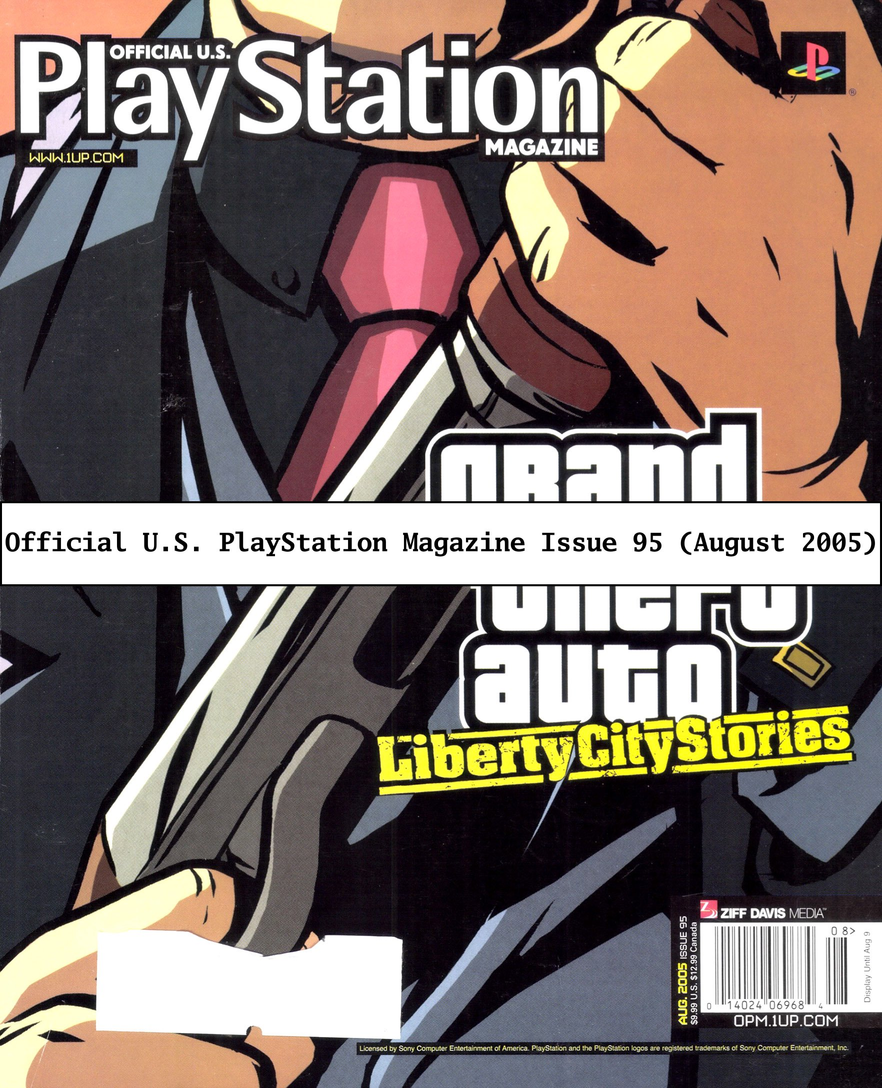
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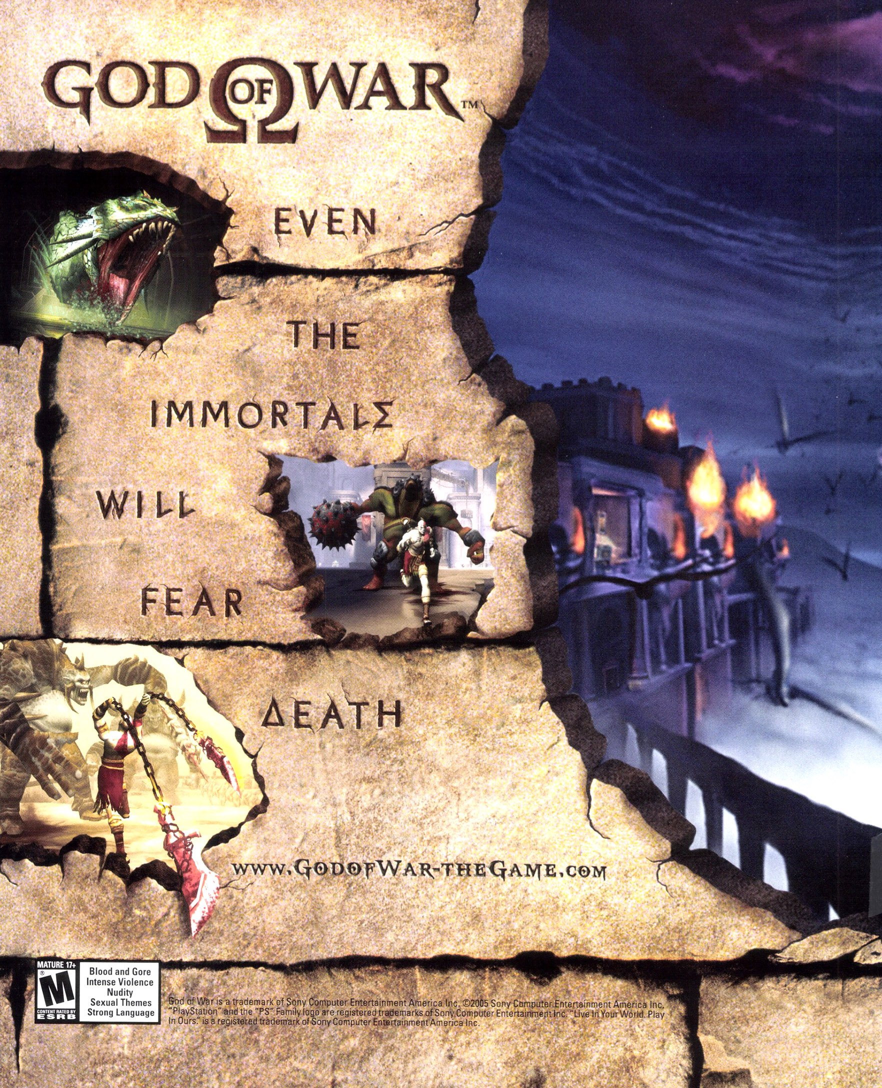
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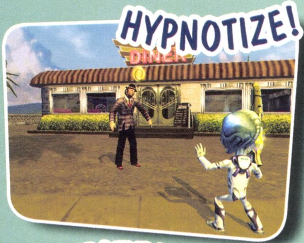
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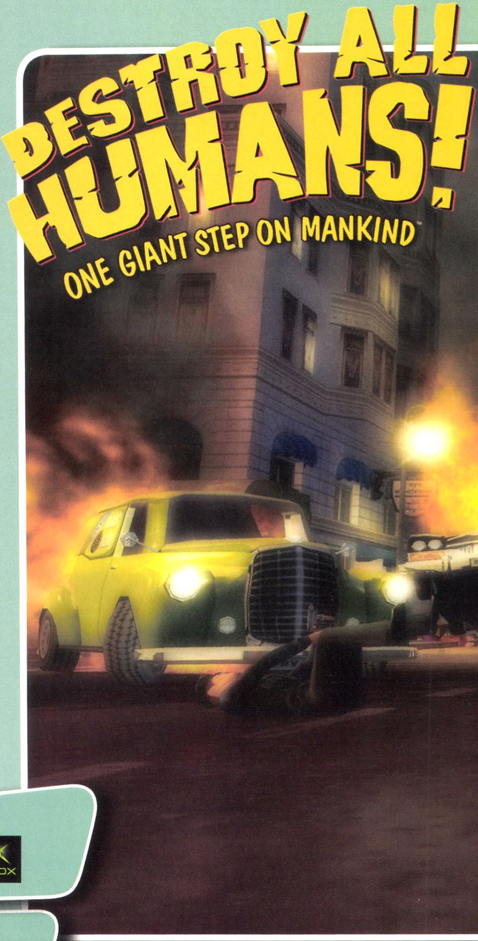
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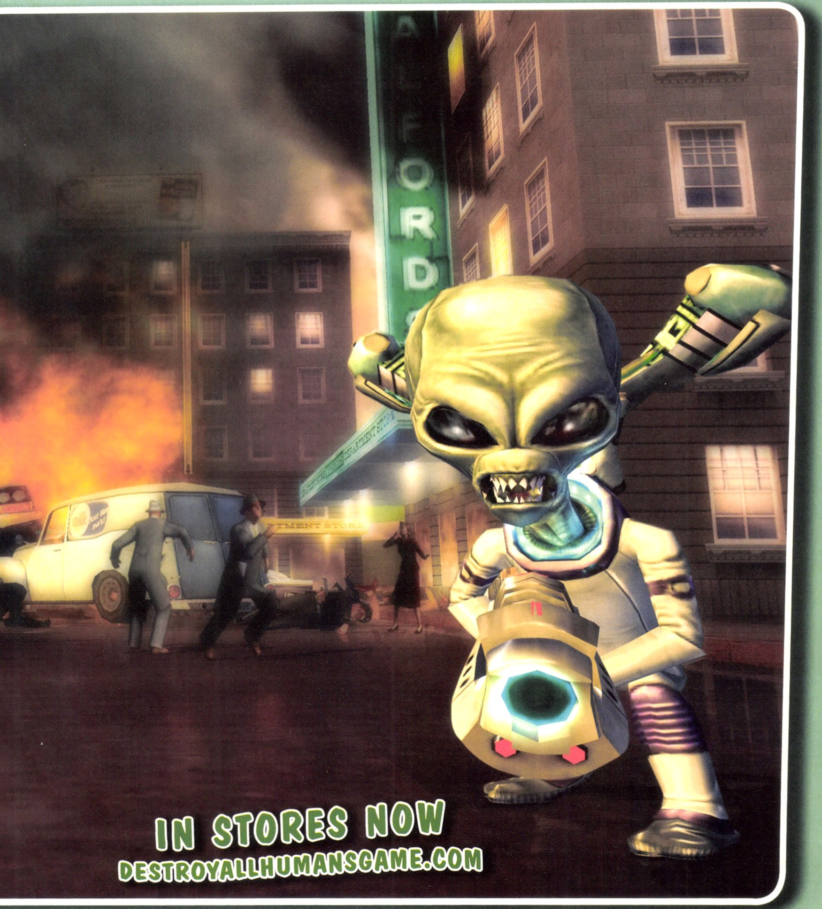
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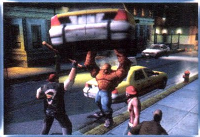

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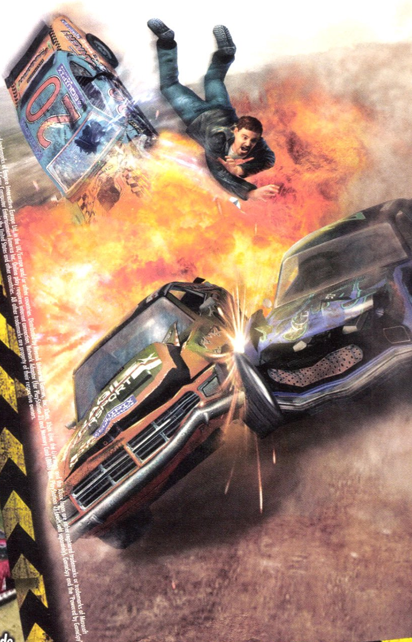

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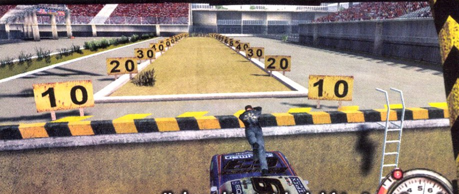
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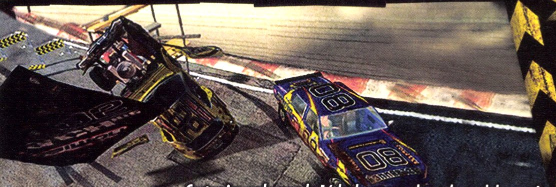
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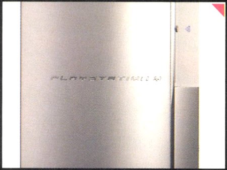

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The countdown to Issue #100 continues.

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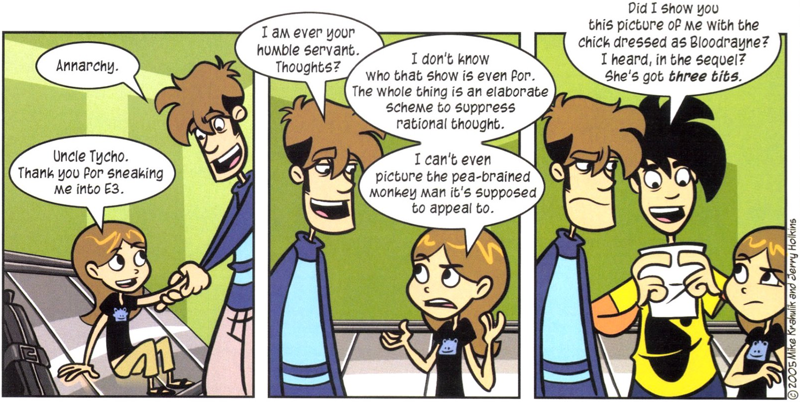
Annarchy.
Uncle Tycho. Thank you for sneaking me into E3.
I am ever your humble servant. Thoughts?
I don't know who that show is even for. The whole thing is an elaborate scheme to suppress rational thought.
I can't even picture the pea-brained monkey man it's supposed to appeal to.
Did I show you this picture of me with the chick dressed as Bloodrayne? I heard, in the sequel? She's got *three tits*.
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GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◖	63
⚡The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**75**
The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age	EA Games	●●	88
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	**EA Games**	**●●●●◖**	**63**
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◖	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◖	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◖	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
Madden NFL 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**60**
Madden NFL 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**72**
⚡Madden NFL 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	83
Mafia	Gathering	●●●◖	79
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
⚡Major League Baseball 2K5	2K Games	●●●●	91
Malice	Mud Duck	●●◖	84
Manhunt	**Rockstar**	**●●●◖**	**76**
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	**Rockstar**	**●●●●**	**53**
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◖	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	**Capcom**	**●●●◖**	**54**
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
McFarlane's Evil Prophecy	Konami	◖	84
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◖	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**58**
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	**EA Games**	**●●●◖**	**76**
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●◖	83
Mega Man X: Command Mission	Capcom	●●●◖	86
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◖	74
Mega Man X8	Capcom	●●●	88
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◖	60
Mercenaries	LucasArts	●●●●◖	89
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	**Konami**	**●●●●●**	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	**●●●●●**	**67**
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	**Konami**	**●●●●●**	**88**
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	**●●●●**	**39**
⚡Midnight Club II	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**67**
⚡Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	●●●●	93
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◖	76
Midway Arcade Treasures 2	Midway	●●●●	87
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◖	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◖	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◖	80
⚡MLB 2006	Sony CEA	●●●◖	91
MLB SlugFest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB SlugFest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67
⚡MLB SlugFest: Loaded	Midway	●●●◖	83
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◖	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◖	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◖	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◖	77
Monster Hunter	Capcom	●●●●	86
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◖	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◖	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	**Midway**	**●●●●**	**64**
⚡Mortal Kombat: Deception	Midway	●●●●	87
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP 2	Namco	●●●●◖	53
MotoGP 3	Namco	●●●●◖	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV Music Generator 3: This Is the Remix	Codemasters	●●●◖	82
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◖	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◖	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◖	52
Musashi Samurai Legend	Square Enix	●●●	91
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	67
⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	80
⚡MVP Baseball 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	91
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◖	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◖	59
⚡MX vs. ATV Unleashed	THQ	●●●●	91
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◖	64
MX Unleashed	**THQ**	**●●●**	**79**
Namco Museum	**Namco**	**●●●◖**	**53**
Nano Breaker	Konami	●●◖	90
NARC	Midway	◖	93
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◖	40
⚡NASCAR 2005: Chase for the Cup	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**85**
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●◖**	**62**

HEAVY MEDAL MEMORIES

We were shocked when *Medal of Honor* took such an unpleasant turn with the uninspiring *Rising Sun*. Now the developers have gone off in a slightly different direction with *European Assault*. Did it work? Turn to page 84 to find out.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NASCAR Thunder 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◖	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**53**
⚡NBA 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**63**
NBA Ballers	**Midway Sports**	●●●●	**80**
NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◖	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◖	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	75
⚡NBA Live 2005	EA Sports	●●●●	86
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◖	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**68**
⚡NBA Street V3	EA Sports Big	●●●●◖	90
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◖	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**60**
NCAA Football 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**71**
⚡NCAA Football 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	83
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◖	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76
⚡NCAA March Madness 2005	EA Sports	●●●◖	88
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**62**
⚡Need for Speed Underground	**EA Games**	●●●●◖	**76**
⚡Need for Speed Underground 2	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**87**
Neo Contra	Konami	●●●◖	87
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	●●●◖	**52**
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◖	60
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◖	50
⚡NFL Street	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●◖	**78**
⚡NFL Street 2	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	89
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
⚡NHL 2005	EA Sports	●●●◖	85
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	●●●●●	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◖	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◖	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Nick Toons: Movin'	THQ	●●●	88
Nightmare of Druaga	Namco	●●	87
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◖	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◖	56
Obscure	DreamCatcher	●●	93
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◖	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	●●●●	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	●●●●	60
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	●●●●◖	81
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
⚡Outlaw Golf 2	Global Star	●◖	88

SEQUEL, PLEASE!

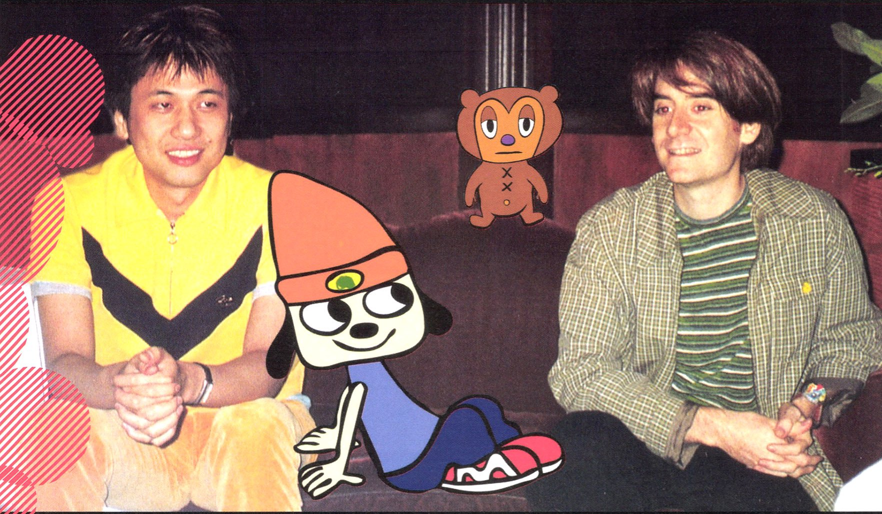
We're still waiting to hear about a sequel to *Psi-Ops*, but it sounds like it won't happen for a while; the *Psi-Ops* team is apparently working on the John Woo vehicle *Stranglehold* for PS3. Oh well.

THE DEATH OF THE "N" SECTION

You'll be seeing a lot fewer new games in this area now that EA has snapped up every license it could get its hands on. At least the unlicensed football games (like *Blitz: The League*) are looking really interesting.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**54**
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◖	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Phantom Brave	NIS America	●●●●◖	85
Pinball Hall of Fame	Crave	●◖	90
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◖	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
Playboy: The Mansion	Arush Ent.	●●	91
The Polar Express	THQ	●●●	88
Pool Paradise	Ignition	●●●◖	83
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50
Power Drome	Mud Duck	●	84
Power Rangers: Dino Thunder	THQ	●●	88
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Predator: Concrete Jungle	VU Games	●●◖	94
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**75**
Prince of Persia: Warrior Within	Ubisoft	●●●●	88
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◖	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◖	52
⚡Project: Snowblind	Eidos	●●●●	91
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Midway	●●●●◖	82
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
The Punisher	THQ	●●●◖	90
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III: Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64
Rapala Pro Fishing	Activision	●●◖	85
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
⚡Ratchet & Clank: Up Your Arsenal	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**87**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	●●●●	82
Red Faction	**THQ**	●●●●●	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Red Ninja: End of Honor	Vivendi Universal	●●	92
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	●●●●◖	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡Resident Evil Outbreak	Capcom	●●●◖	81
⚡Resident Evil Outbreak: File #2	Capcom	●◖	92
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ribbit King	Bandai	●●●	82
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
Rise of the Kasai	Sony CEA	●●●◖	92
Rise to Honor	**Sony CEA**	●●●	**78**
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Robotech: Invasion	Global Star	●●●	86
Robots	Vivendi Universal	●	92
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64
Rocky Legends	Ubisoft	●●◖	87
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	●●◖	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●◖	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●	73
Romance of the Three Kingdoms X	Koei	●●●◖	94

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	●●●◖	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	●●	71
Rugby	EA Sports	●●●◖	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	●●●	73
Rugby 2005	EA Sports	●●◖	91
Rumble Racing	EA Games	●●●●◖	45
Rumble Roses	Konami	●●●	88
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	●●◖	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80
Samurai Warriors	Koei/EA	●●●●	81
Samurai Warriors: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●	88
Samurai Western	Atlus	●●●	94
Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	●●◖	81
Savage Skies	Bam	●●●	56
Scaler	Global Star	●●●●	88
Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	●●●	81
Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	**THQ**	●●●	**58**
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	●●	62
SD Gundam Force: Showdown!	Bandai	●●●◖	88
Second Sight	Codemasters	●●●●	86
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	●●●◖	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	●●●	62
Sega Classics Collection	Sega	●●	90
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
Sega Superstars	Sega	●●●●	88
⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow Hearts: Covenant	Midway	●●●●	86
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow of Rome	Capcom	●●●●	89
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaman King: Power of Spirit	Konami	●●◖	89
Shark Tale	Activision	●●◖	88
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
ShellShock: Nam '67	Eidos	●●	85
Shifters	3DO	●	58
Shin Megami Tensei: Digital Devil Saga	Atlus	●●●●	92
Shin Megami Tensei: Nocturne	Atlus	●●●●◖	86
Shining Tears	Sega	●●●	90
Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Showdown: Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●◖	83
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek 2	**Activision**	●●●◖	**82**
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Siren	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	●●●●◖	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Hill 4: The Room	Konami	●●●●◖	85
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	**Vivendi Universal**	●●●●	**72**
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	●●●	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	**EA Games**	●●●●	**65**
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	**EA Games**	●●●●◖	**76**
Sitting Ducks	Hip Interactive	●●●	88
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**62**
Sly 2: Band of Thieves	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**86**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2	Namco	●●●●	82
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	●●●●◖	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59



BEHIND THE GAME:
PARAPPA

HALLUCINOGENIC BRILLIANCE

It's hard to overstate how incredibly strange *PaRappa the Rapper* was when it appeared—or maybe dropped from a passing UFO—in the fall of 1997. You couldn't tell anyone about the game without having to repeat its name a few times: "PA-RA-PPA, THE, RAPP-ER…like someone who raps…with a microphone." And you couldn't explain the concept with words alone. It had to be seen.

From the moment you press the power button, *PaRappa* gushes pure psychedelic whimsy: it features a suburban town filled with talking (and sometimes rapping) plants and animals, pulsing to the beat of nursery rhyme hip-hop. These cartoon hallucinations came courtesy of New York artist Rodney Greenblat, whose playful Day-Glo art had already made its rounds from painting and sculpture in the '80s to children's books and multimedia projects in the '90s. Greenblat's art for *PaRappa* warped the manicured lawns and picket fences of suburban America into a weird new world.

"That's where I'm from," says Greenblat. "And that's the kind of landscape I've been drawing all these years. But [the world of *PaRappa*] is kind of a universal suburbia; the houses don't look like real houses. We didn't have a specific location in mind, except that it would be from my mind."

Greenblat came to the project by way of Japanese musician and multimedia experimentalist Masaya Matsuura. At the time Matsuura was creating homemade music-sampling and -manipulation programs. He enjoyed playing with the software, splicing up and manipulating music, and saw potential in it for a videogame. Rap music's emphasis on rhythm and structure made it the perfect playground.

The basic concept for *PaRappa* is a bit like the old light-up memory game Simon, but with a musical twist. Players repeat button sequences given to them in the game, tapping along to the rhythm of a song. The stroke of genius, descended from Matsuura's experiments with music software, is that these button-presses trigger snippets of a prerecorded rap vocal, essentially allowing players to rap along to the beat by pressing buttons on a PlayStation controller.

Matsuura stumbled upon one of Greenblat's children's books while recording in New York. Convinced that his drawing style was perfect for the game he had in mind, Matsuura pitched the idea to Greenblat. As luck would have it, Greenblat just happened to be employed by Sony Creative Products, which turned out pop-art consumer goods, T-shirts, notebooks, lunch boxes, and the like, in Japan. It was the perfect in, but Greenblat was skeptical at first about how his style would fit with the music.

"Originally, I thought it would be difficult to do a rap game, because rap is an inner-city thing," says Greenblat. "I thought it would be difficult to make it a funny experience. Would my art suit rap? But then when I started to get the idea of what [Matsuura] wanted to do, it wasn't going to be a hip-hop world. It was going to be a Rodney world—a crazy, anything-can-happen sort of world."

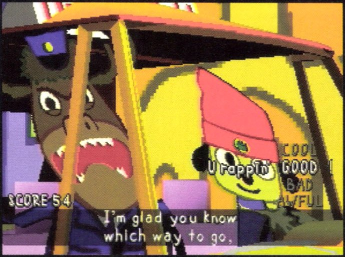
So Greenblat set out on the mammoth task of creating characters and environments for the game without reference points, an all-new creation. The process was open-ended and collaborative.

"The first thing [Matsuura] did was describe [PaRappa's] personality to

Excuse me!
This is an emergency!

PLANNING L
☐ SET UP PAR
☐ GET PRESEN
☐ GET CAKE

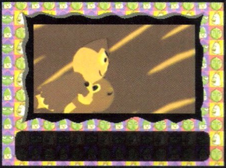
we need someone to get a present.
we need someone to buy a cake.

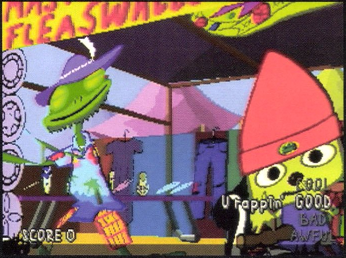


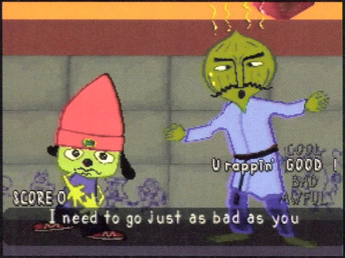
I'm glad you know
which way to go.

Not only munchies
but a little babe.

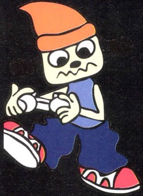
U-DRIVE-U
SCORE 0
GOOD !

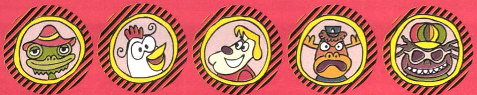


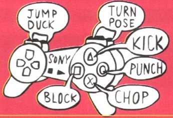




I need to go just as bad as you







me," says Greenblat. "I came up with all kinds of drawings. I didn't really know where to start. I just drew all kinds of creatures. And then we started to get closer to this sort of dog invention. He went through a lot of changes before he became what he is. It was a crazy, fatherly process."

Like the popular '80s Saturday-morning staple *Pee-wee's Playhouse*, *PaRappa* walked the narrow line between kid friendly and drug damaged. Characters like PJ Berri (the always-hungry teddy bear turntablist) and Sunny Funny (PaRappa's sunflower-headed crush) beamed wide-eyed, freaky charm. Greenblat's art made *PaRappa the Rapper* part of an elite class of games in which every character is distinct and memorable.

This was, no doubt, aided by the inventive way the characters were presented in the game. Instead of creating full-blown 3D figures from Greenblat's art, the team used flat, paper-thin drawings that danced around in an open 3D world. "In the beginning, it was just like paper cutouts," says Greenblat. "It looked really funny, but I liked it. Now the characters fold, like they're flexible in many directions. They have so much life." This much-copied idea was partly responsible for a sea change in what was once vaguely called "good graphics." Up until that point, the quality of a game's visual elements was largely a matter of fidelity: how detailed, sharp, and technically impressive the game was.

But *PaRappa* created a new category. Its charms were largely the result of great art direction and inventive presentation. As the PlayStation moved into the modern era of cinematic realism, the creative minds behind *PaRappa* chose art and character over technical prowess.

Of course, just as much of that charm came from the game's music. Matsuura's tunes for *PaRappa the Rapper* were catchy and mysterious, dipping into reggae and house music, but always sticking closely to the lighthearted style of old-school hip-hop. The lyrics were simple but absurd. Who could forget catchy nonsense like, "The skunk over here will bring you luck/ The pump over here comes with a truck," as intoned by flea-market seller/Rasta frog Prince Fleaswallow?

PaRappa the Rapper's influence is everywhere. You can see it in rhythm games like *Frequency* and *Gitaroo Man*, certainly. But even outside its genre, *PaRappa* helped create a niche for new ideas in art direction. The vibrant worlds of games like *Katamari Damacy*, *Okami*, and *Viewtiful Joe* owe a debt to Matsuura and Greenblat's pioneering work. As the next generation of gaming hardware approaches, developers will focus their budgets and attention on impressive shows of realism. Games that play by their own rules, games that invent their own worlds and speak their own language—games like *PaRappa the Rapper*—will be a valuable commodity. « *Robert Ashley*

IT WALKED THE LINE BETWEEN KID FRIENDLY AND DRUG DAMAGED.

PS1-DERLAND

WHEN GAMING GREW UP

JEREMY PARISH

When not trying to reclaim his vanished youth with obsolete games, Jeremy works as 1UP.com's features editor and charming mascot. Check out his blog at toastyfrog.1UP.com.

It's been more than 10 years since the PlayStation debuted in that faraway land called Japan to the sound of 90 million blown minds. Ten years! That's a full decade: two lifetimes in console terms, 3,650 generations in fruit-fly years, or just about enough time to play through *Dragon Warrior VII* a second time.

What this means, essentially, is that the PlayStation is now a classic system. It's an old console, a fact that makes me feel even older. All those classes skipped for a two-week orgy of *Final Fantasy Tactics*; slipping *Oddworld* references into my university newspaper; the debates with roommates over Sony's system versus the Nintendo 64...all this happened before the current crop of aspiring Pokémaniacs was even born.

I was born in 1975, the year that Atari's *Home Pong* first arrived and truly launched the console gaming industry. In a very real sense, I've been growing up right alongside games. So it's fitting that the 32-bit era wasn't simply a better-looking phase of gaming; it was when the medium really began to grow up. My peers and I were busily preparing for the concerns of Real Life right as the industry decided to go from pastel cartoon mascots to something more representative of the real world.

Like most geek culture, games are still mired in the misperception that titillation equals maturity, but the PS1 was where console gaming made its first significant strides toward something more adult than the comic book "realism" of *Mortal Kombat*.

THE PS1 IS NOW A CLASSIC SYSTEM. IT'S AN OLD CONSOLE.

And no other series more effectively embodies the awkward balance between childish pandering and genuine sophistication than *Grand Theft Auto*—which, fittingly enough, got its start on PS1 (as well as PC and Dreamcast, but let's not split hairs).

It's interesting to go back and reexperience the original *GTA* after being immersed in its sequels for (entirely too many) hours, because it really was a blueprint for the series' contemporary titles. The cities, the spray shops, the crime families, the vehicles, the dog-eat-dog rise to the top of the underworld are all there, just viewed from above rather than from within the thick of things. *GTA3* was a surprise megahit, but it wasn't particularly radical or innovative. In fact, almost everything about it was simply a rehash of the previous titles—everything but the visuals.

It's a perfect summation of the consoles themselves. The PS1 was about originality and innovation, while the PS2 is where those great ideas have been refined and perfected. Revolution versus evolution. And history will likely repeat itself: *GTA* for PSP is arriving just as people have begun to regard portable gaming less as a diversion for kids and more as a legitimate form of gaming.

Games like *Grand Theft Auto* are the reason that the PS1 made gaming genuinely cool for the first time. At long last, we geeks were admired by our enemies, the jocks, rather than despised. Instead of beating us up, they borrowed our copies of *Resident Evil*. Who would have thought back in 1995 that something so good could result from the system responsible for *Battle Arena Toshinden*? «

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Sonic Mega Collection	Sega	●●●	88
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	●●●●●	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75
Spider-Man	**Activision**	●●●●◖	**57**
Spider-Man 2	Activision	●●●◖	84
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	●●●●●	**72**
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	**THQ**	●●●●◖	**75**
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Movie	THQ	●●●●◖	87
Spy Fiction	Sammy	●●	85
SpyHunter	**Midway**	●●●●◖	**50**
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	**Vivendi Universal**	●●●	**64**
Spyro: A Hero's Tail	Vivendi Universal	●●	87
⚡SRS: Street Racing Syndicate	Namco	●●●	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**74**
Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	Square Enix	●●●●	84
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◖	53
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65
Star Wars Battlefront	LucasArts	●●●●◖	86
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	**LucasArts**	●●●	**64**
Star Wars Episode III: Revenge/Sith	LucasArts	●●●	94
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◖	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◖	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	●●●●◖	**43**
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	**Rockstar**	●●●	**55**
Stella Deus: The Gate of Eternity	Atlus	●●●●	93
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◖	59
Stolen	Hip Interactive	●●●	94
Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom	●●●●	84
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◖	39
Street Hoops	**Activision**	●●●◖	**60**
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◖	47
Strike Force Bowling	Crave	●◖	82
Stuntman	**Infogrames/Atari**	●●●	**59**
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	●●●●	62
The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80
Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Suikoden IV	Konami	●●●	89
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◖	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◖	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◖	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Super Monkey Ball Deluxe	Sega	●●●	92
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◖	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◖	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◖	63
Surfing H30	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	●●●	81
Taiko: Drum Master	Namco	●●●●	87
Tak and the Power of Juju	**THQ**	●●●◖	**75**
Tak 2: The Staff of Dreams	THQ	●●●◖	88
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◖	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◖	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◖	75
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 2	Konami	●	86
Tekken 4	**Namco**	●●●◖	**61**
Tekken 5	Namco	●●●●	92
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**39**
Technic Beat	Mastiff	●●●	89
Tenchu: Fatal Shadows	Sega	●●	90
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◖	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◖	77
Terminator 3: The Redemption	Atari	●●●◖	86
Test Drive	**Infogrames**	●●●◖	**58**
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Test Drive: Eve of Destruction	Atari	●●●●	85
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◖	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	63
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2005	EA Sports	●●●●◖	86
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49

SUIKODAMN

Don't let the low scores for *Suikoden III* and *IV* give you the impression the whole series is mediocre; the first two games (on PS1) are amazing.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◖	74
Time Crisis: Crisis Zone	Namco	●●●◖	86
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡TimeSplitters: Future Perfect	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**91**
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	●●●●	86
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◖	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	**Ubisoft**	●●●◖	**65**
⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Ubisoft	●●●◖	78
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	**Ubisoft**		**68**
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Chaos Theory	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**92**
⚡Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**82**
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	**Eidos**	●●	**72**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	●●●●●	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	●●●●●	**76**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground 2	Activision	●●●●◖	87
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◖	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◖	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transformers	Atari	●●●◖	81
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◖	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◖	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Atari	●●	81
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	**Activision**	●●	**76**
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◖	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	**EA Games**	●●●	**62**
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger 2: Bush Rescue	EA Games	●●●●	88
UEFA Euro 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	82
UFC Throwdown	Crave	●●●◖	58
UFC Sudden Impact	Crave	●●●◖	82
Under the Skin	Capcom	●●●◖	86
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◖	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
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READER REVIEWS

TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT

WHAT YOU SAID

"First of all, one thing: AWE-SOME. *TimeSplitters: Future Perfect* is amazing, from the moment you see the loading screen [with the] redesigned TimeSplitters to the very last fight. (Hint: It's not a battle against an oversized TimeSplitter or a bunch of them put together, although it's pretty cool.)

"There's a huge change of pace for those who are familiar with the last two games. For one, there's the story—that's right, a STORY, not a bunch of [levels featuring] random places throughout time put on one disc. For fans of Free Radical's other work, the developer kindly took the telekinesis ability from *Second Sight* and crammed it in here as well. The real complaint, though, is with the time traveling. The levels are still treated like separate things; instead of one [interconnected] time span, you're jumping in between [different time periods]. This will annoy some people, but otherwise, it's great! Then there are the other modes, which are superb—a group prison break-in on Mars is a thrill. The challenge modes offer crazy tasks like shooting zombie cow carcasses with a dart gun. The mapmaker still has a sweet selection of options for your time-consuming pleasure. Finally, the online mode has once again made me glad I got a connection!

"Overall, the game is jaw-dropping in every way, so saddle up and get ready to kick some butt, 'cause it's time to split!"

[●●●●●]

Jack Butler

WHAT WE SAID

"*Future Perfect* is the kind of game that places pure entertainment above stodgy realism and loads up the experience with tons of extras, minigames, and well-paced rewards."

[●●●●●]

DEVIL MAY CRY 3: DANTE'S AWAKENING

WHAT YOU SAID

"*Devil May Cry 3* is probably the greatest thing to come around since sliced bread. It's got wonderful graphics, some excellent action scenes, responsive controls, good voice acting, and best of all, a story that finally makes sense. All this isn't even the start; *Devil May Cry 3* totally revitalizes a series that *Devil May Cry 2* had ruined. It brings back hope for the series' future. If you were disappointed by *Devil May Cry 2*—and you can't deny you were—then you should get *Devil May Cry 3*. You'll be glad you did."

[●●●●●]

Rogan Derrick

WHAT WE SAID

"Nearly every aspect of the game is fantastic—great character designs, awesome-looking levels, responsive controls, and some excellent action."

[●●●●◐]

Want to have your say about a recent game? Send your review (don't forget the score!) to opm@ziffdavis.com with the subject "READER REVIEW" and it may get printed.

REWIND

OPM THROUGH THE YEARS

THE SAGA CONTINUES

OPM is just six issues away from No. 100. Continuing with the theme of the last few months, we're taking a look at Issues #34 through #44. This was a big time in PlayStation history, most notably due to the U.S. PS2 launch, which resulted in nationwide shortages and eBay prices in the thousands of dollars. Plus, *OPM* moved to our current, bigger format!

ISSUE #34: JULY 2000

Cover story: *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2*
Reviewed: *The Legend of Dragoon* (4.5/5), *Grind Session* (4/5), *Strider 2* (3.5/5)
Previewed: *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty, TimeSplitters, RPG Maker, Driver 2*
Best quote to remember for PS3: "With new hardware, the people who are having a lot of trouble are the ones who are talking a lot of s***." —Rockstar producer Jeronimo Barrera

ISSUE #35: AUGUST 2000

Cover story: *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*
Reviewed: *RPG Maker* (4.5/5), *Legend of Mana* (2.5/5), *Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure* (3/5)
Previewed: *Dark Cloud, Zone of the Enders, Final Fantasy IX, Tenchu 2, Incredible Crisis*
Oddest coverage choice: Need we say it? We put *Regis Philbin* on the cover! In our defense, his game show was enormous at the time, and the cover was sort of an experiment. But still!

ISSUE #36: SEPTEMBER 2000

Cover story: *Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver 2*
Reviewed: *Chrono Cross* (5/5), *Valkyrie Profile* (4/5), *Mortal Kombat: Special Forces* (1.5/5)
Previewed: *Dynasty Warriors 2, Shadow of Destiny, Parasite Eve II, Red Faction*
Slightly surreal, somewhat fanboyish moment: Having award-winning sci-fi author Orson Scott Card and comic godfather Stan Lee *both* write columns for *OPM*.

ISSUE #37: OCTOBER 2000

Cover story: *Star Wars Starfighter*
Reviewed: *Parasite Eve II* (4.5/5), *Star Trek: Invasion* (4.5/5), *Spider-Man* (5/5)
Previewed: *Crash Bash, SSX, Smuggler's Run, The Bouncer, Wipeout: Fusion*
Most amusing sign of the times: We get all gaga over new $500 Sony PDAs, which sport an astonishing *eight* megabytes of memory! Today we've got four times that in our *phones*.

ISSUE #38: NOVEMBER 2000

Cover story: PlayStation 2
Reviewed: *SSX* (5/5), *Ridge Racer V* (4.5/5), *Dino Crisis 2* (4.5/5), *Alien Resurrection* (3/5)
Previewed: *Tekken Tag Tournament, Star Wars Starfighter, Medal of Honor Underground*
Most unreasonably optimistic quote: "Hopefully, we'll be able to bring you more specific news on Sony's broadband plans in next month's issue."

ISSUE #39: DECEMBER 2000

Cover story: *Crash Bash*
Reviewed: *Tekken Tag Tournament* (4.5/5), *TimeSplitters* (5/5), *Midnight Club* (4/5)
Previewed: *Twisted Metal: Black, Silent Hill 2, Sky Odyssey, C-12*
Best review ever: Gary Steinman's *Grinch* review, set to Seuss-style verse: "With Christmas upon us and gift-giving near, / Here's a sure way to ruin holiday cheer." Priceless.

ISSUE #40: JANUARY 2001

Cover story: *Gran Turismo 3*
Reviewed: *Fantavision* (4/5), *Unreal Tournament* (2.5/5), *Driver 2* (4/5)
Previewed: *Onimusha: Warlords, Red Faction*
Cruelest advice to parents: "Take a picture of a PlayStation 2, put it in an envelope, and stick it under the tree with a note saying that you'll buy your children one as soon as it becomes available." —Wal-Mart, on the PS2 shortage

ISSUE #41: FEBRUARY 2001

Cover story: *Zone of the Enders*
Reviewed: *Driving Emotion Type-S* (2.5/5), *Evil Dead: Hail to the King* (2.5/5), *Star Wars Demolition* (3.5/5), *Persona 2* (4/5)
Previewed: *Ring of Red, Devil May Cry, World's Scariest Police Chases*
Best explanation of why the camera in *MGS* hasn't changed in all this time: "I have a problem with motion sickness." —Hideo Kojima

ISSUE #42: MARCH 2001

Cover story: EA Sports Big
Reviewed: *The Bouncer* (3/5), *Dance Dance Revolution* (4/5), *ATV Offroad Fury* (4/5)
Previewed: *Resident Evil: Code Veronica, Klonoa 2, The Lost*
Videogame-related media sensation of the month: OMG, Saddam Hussein is hoarding PS2s to build a world-destroying supercomputer!!!!! Wait, no, the story's completely fake.

ISSUE #43: APRIL 2001

Cover story: *Twisted Metal: Black*
Reviewed: *Star Wars Starfighter* (4.5/5), *Oni* (1.5/5), *Ring of Red* (4/5), *Fear Effect 2* (4.5/5)
Previewed: *Gitaroo-Man, Kessen II, Black & White, Shadow Hearts*
Snarkiest quote: "It seems the license- and sequel-obsessed publisher feels just a touch threatened by Sega's impending entry into direct competition." —Sega Europe, on EA

ISSUE #44: MAY 2001

Cover story: *Medal of Honor Frontline*
Reviewed: *Zone of the Enders* (4.5/5), *Quake III: Revolution* (4.5/5), *Point Blank 3* (3.5/5)
Previewed: *Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex, Virtua Fighter 4, Grand Theft Auto III*
Your Kojima moment of Zen: "As games get more realistic, developers shouldn't attempt to create real life, because it won't be fun. Everybody wants to get away from their real lives."

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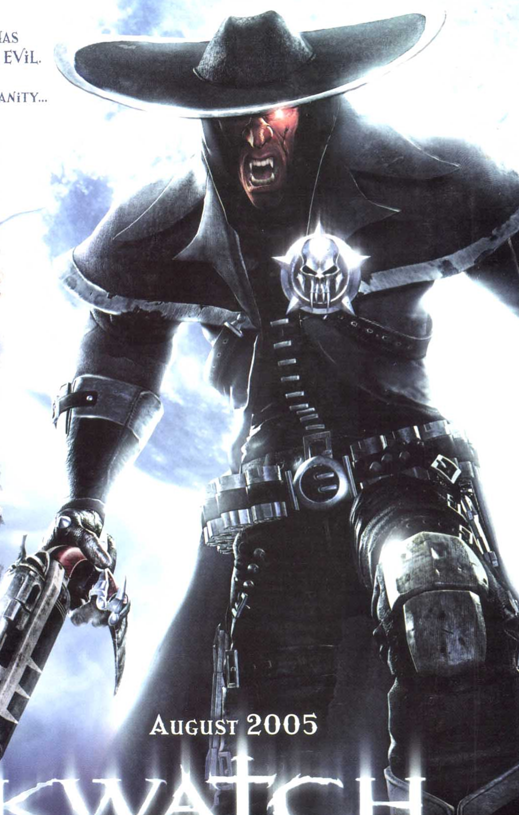

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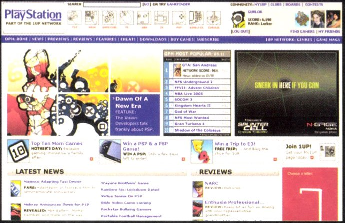
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Dawn Of A New Era
FEATURE: The Vision: Developers talk frankly about PSP.

OPM MOST POPULAR

1. GTA: San Andreas
2. NFS Underground 2
3. FFVII: Advent Children
4. NBA Live 2005
5. SOCOM 3
6. Kingdom Hearts II
7. God of War
8. NFS Most Wanted
9. Gran Turismo 4
10. Shadow of the Colossus

Top Ten Mom Games
MOTHER'S DAY:

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LATEST NEWS

Majesco Adapting Taxi Driver
Midway Announces Three for PSP
Wayans Brothers' Game
Rainbow Six: Lockdown Dated
Virtua Tennis On PSP
Bible Video Game Coming
Rockstar Bullying Gamers
Portable Football Management

REVIEWS

NARC
Enthusia Professional...

1UP.COM
There are many similarities between 1UP and 7-UP: Both are sparkling, both can quench your thirst, and both are a refreshing treat. For extreme pleasure, crack open a can of the uncola to sip while you read the latest gaming tidbits!

OPM.1UP.COM
Why does Giancarlo love sandwiches so? Why is Scooter entering eggroll-eating contests? What is it with Ryan's unhealthy fascination with corn dogs? To find out the answers behind our food obsessions, visit our virtual home!

PSP.1UP.COM
Scooter loves watching *Top Gun* on his PSP. To really get in the mood of the film, he wears his aviator shades. And his flight suit and helmet, which draws a few stares on the bus. To find out how you can watch movies on your PSP—and to figure out all the other neat things you can do—drop by.

PS2.1UP.COM
In all the excitement over the PlayStation 3, your PlayStation 2 has started to feel sad and neglected. But it still deserves your love, especially because it's going to be at least a year until you get your new best friend.

BOARDS.1UP.COM
Those of us employed at *OPM* work 40 or 50 hours a week at our jobs. That makes us slackers, because there are people who spend twice as much time commenting on our work as we spend doing it. Stop by and say hi to them.

CLUBS.1UP.COM
Being around people who are different than you can be scary at times. And therein lies the beauty of a club: It's a chance for you to hang out only with people who are the same. Huzzah for homogeny!

ON THE DVD

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

Proof that meats and cheeses aren't the only good things that come on shiny platters, here's a disc full of aliens, anime dudes, people wearing Hammer pants, and monsters galore. Play some demos and eat some Gouda!

OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation

PLAY IT

ALSO CHECK OUT

Do you love guns like guns love bullets? Then check out the videos for both *25 to Life* and *Coded Arms*.

Destroy All Humans!

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

If you don't like reading about the terrible secrets of space on page 86, we guess you can play the demo and experience the mind-bending fury yourself.

Fullmetal Alchemist 2

FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST

This demo shows that before you can turn lead into gold, you need to learn how to turn a barrel into a dollhouse full of bomb-carrying robo-mice.

RISE OF THE KASAI

The sequel to *The Mark of Kri* features Rau and his sister, some action, as well as a lot of tribal-style art. Check it out if you need new tattoo ideas.

Flipnic
Ultimate Pinball

FLIPNIC

If you don't love pinball, then frankly you either hate freedom or are some kind of space zombie. Find out if you're a zombie by checking out the demo.

Prince of Persia
The Sands of Time

PRINCE OF PERSIA: TSOT

Before the Prince became filled with rage, he was a lovable Hammer-pants-wearing fellow. Relive his first adventure into the Sands of Time.

Prince of Persia
Warrior Within

POP: WARRIOR WITHIN

The second PS2 game in the series takes a turn to the dark side with the Prince now looking like a professional BMX rider or an extra from *The Crow*.

WATCH IT

GOJIRA!

There's also some sort of download for *Godzilla: Save the Earth*. Still no unlockable Raymond Burr as far as we know, though.

Twisted Metal
Head-On

TWISTED METAL: HEAD-ON

Want to know everything about the PSP incarnation of the *Twisted Metal* series? No? Well, you'll be missing out on a pretty interesting video.

Ratchet & Clank

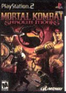
RATCHET & CLANK: UYA

This is some sort of cool move about getting more money for your lombax or whatever. But the real deal with this video is that it features the return of Saul!

Fantastic 4

FANTASTIC FOUR

While everyone else on staff watches this video to try to see more Jessica "See-Thru Shirt" Alba, Scooter just wants to see that awesome Dr. Doom statue.



MK: SHAOLIN MONKS

Don't let previous *Mortal Kombat* side stories throw you off. *Shaolin Monks* looks like it'll have some legitimately cool stuff for *MK* fans.

PLAYSTATION UNDERGROUND TEAM

Demo Disc Producers
Gary Barth, Cori Lucas, Manuel Sousa, Chris Tan
Marketing Team
Steve Williams, Eric Lempel, Jesse Caid
Executive Producer
Andrew House
Format Q&A
Sam Bradley, Edward Toomy
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Eric Ippolito

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3D Artists Jason Robinson, Philip Williamson, David Hayes
Producer Jessi Harrison
President Katherine Williams
Technical Director Tim Edwards

SPECIAL THANKS
Maimoona Block, Kirsten Costello, Christine DeNezza, Tom Gillan, Gerald Martin, Sean Thomas, Jim Williams

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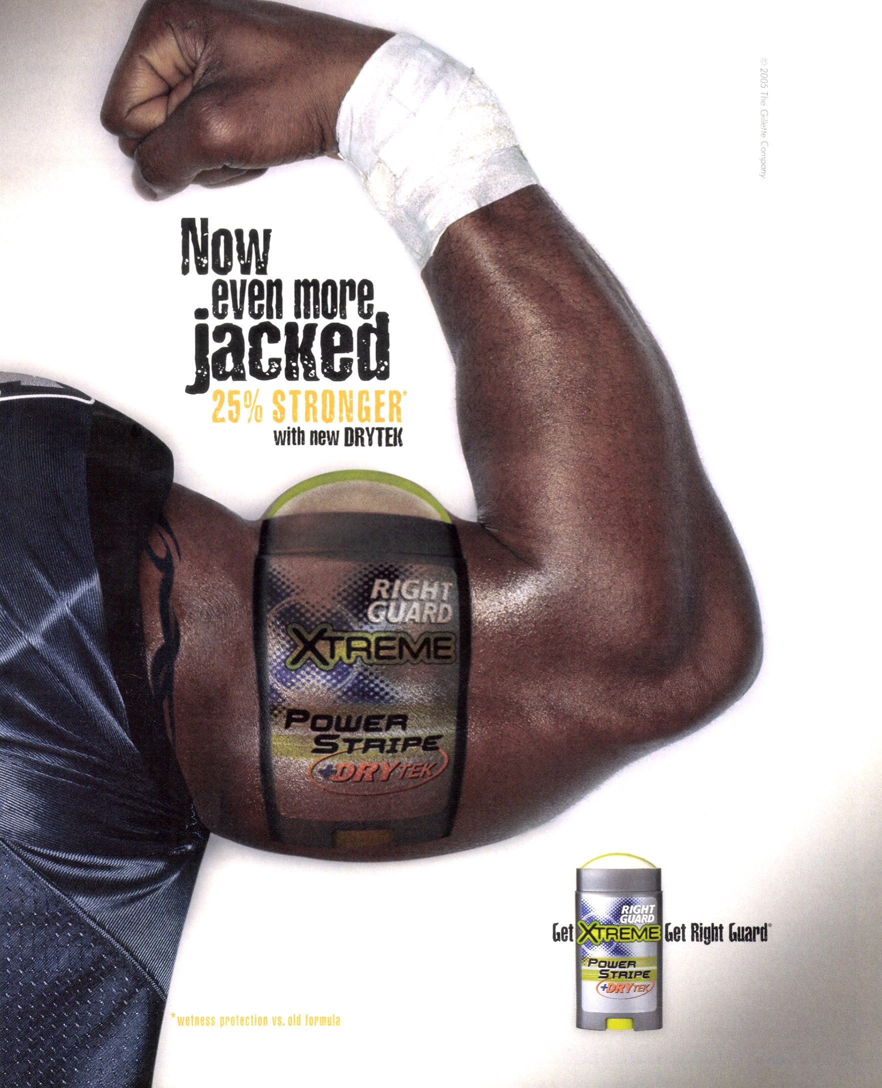
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PS3 SHOCK AND AWE

SONY STUNS THE E3 CROWD—AND RAINS ON MICROSOFT'S PARADE

To our list of "14 Sequels No One Asked For" (page 98), add a 15th: Xbox 360. Now, now, hear me out before you wave me off with an, "Of course you'd say that, Tom." And I should probably qualify that opening statement: No one's asking for Xbox 360 *yet.* The current-generation Xbox is a powerful bit of machinery that can still do amazing things—is its time really up? Is the game-playing consumer ready for a new console this fall? Where's the demand?

Which brings me to my real point: the PS3. At May's Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3), Microsoft was supposed to own the show, but instead it got totally owned by Sony. Holy crap, the PS3 is gonna be awesome, beyond anything you could imagine, and our 10-page feature on Sony's next-gen beauty bears ample early testimony. (Check it out for yourself on page 60.) Expect significant PS3 coverage from us in the coming months as we count down to its '06 (probably fall) release. Note to Microsoft: You'll have about one year. Good luck. « *Tom Byron*

THE OPM FAMILY

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DANA JONGEWAARD felt incredibly torn when she met Tetsuya Mizuguchi at E3. Should she hug him for making *Lumines*, her favorite PSP game? Or should she wring his neck for sucking away hours and hours of her life with his evil, time-wasting creation?

I DIDN'T
WANT TO
GO ANYWAY...
WEN

JOE RYBICKI will not be seen around these parts for a few weeks. He's off getting married, taking his longest vacation ever for his honeymoon, and is so committed to disconnecting from the world that he's not even bringing his PSP. He's planning on drinking heavily to compensate.

THIERRY NGUYEN is working on a new career as a singer/songwriter. So far, the fruits of his labor include redoing "Paradise City" as "Liberty City" and the painful rock ballad "We Built This (Liberty) City on Rock and Roll!" His CD will be on sale at the Applebee's down the street.

GIANCARLO VARANINI was happily surprised by how much Sony actually showed of the PlayStation 3. But please, Sony, for all that is holy and sacred in this world, please don't use that *Spider-Man* font. It makes baby Shamu cry, and we don't want that now, do we?

LOGAN PARR is convinced the Matrix is real after checking out *The Path of Neo* at E3. Of course, it may be that red M&M he ate from the show floor. Either way, he now wears a long overcoat and shades around the office all day and spouts gibberish about needing to use the phone to escape.

RYAN VULK aka Melkor, wants to give a shout-out to the peeps in the Rune crew up in the Ramuh realm of *FFXI*, the most foul-mouthed bunch of fools he has ever met. Also an innocent /smile and /wave to that lovely mithra Ameow. Thanks for the late nights beating s*** up. /hugs

ALEJANDRO CHAVETTA was last seen at Pravda, a club in Reykjavik, Iceland, wearing nothing but undergarments stolen from Scooter's cube, dancing to the Ludacris/Kylie tune "I'm gonna lick you from your head to your toes" as he was being chased by angry Vikings.

ZOE FLOWER has been jet-setting around the country for the past few weeks. In fact, after returning from her consecutive trips to Los Angeles, Austin, Miami, and New York, she realized that she has only been home for five days of the last month. Oh well—who needs home when you've got games?

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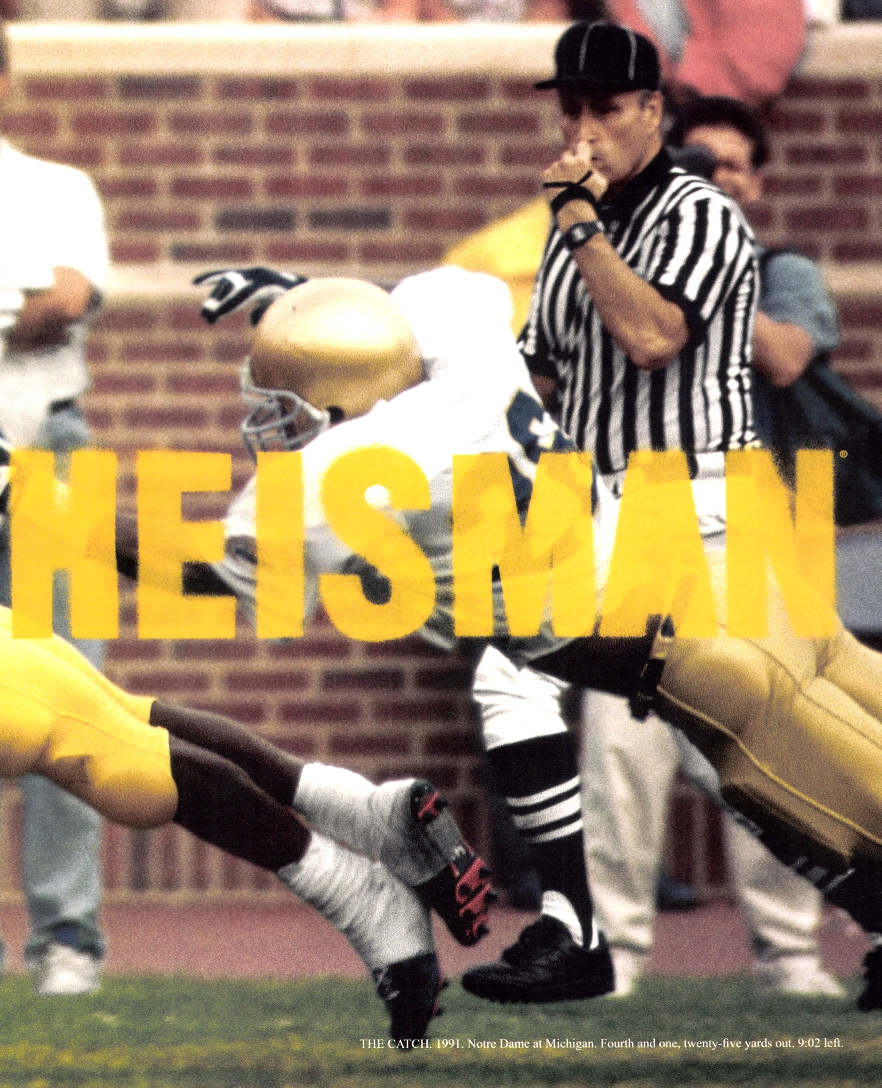

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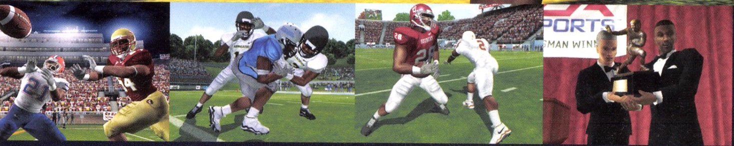

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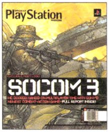
PlayStation
SOCOM 3
WE SCORED HANDS-ON MULTIPLAYER TIME WITH SONY'S NEWEST COMBAT-ACTION GAME—FULL REPORT INSIDE!

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Listen kids, it's official...I am so far behind that I may never have to buy a new game again. I'm 48, female, and running out of steam! I even connected my PS2 to my computer [monitor], thinking that because I use it so much that maybe, just maybe, I might make a dent in my PlayStation pile. Nope. I currently have a four-month stack of your demo discs yet to check out! I have a huge pile of PS1 games stuffed in a box that I can't even force myself to look at anymore...it is too dang depressing, and I can't begin to start on the computer games gathering dust. All you twenty-somethings better appreciate that lovely metabolism because I am here to tell you that nearing 50, by the time you go to work, come home, and do your chores for the day, there just isn't much energy nor time left for those spectacular games, no matter how much you want to play them! They better have some PlayStations at the rest home, I'm just sayin'....

So, with all of that in mind...I still hear the little gamer voices in my head saying stuff like, "Yeah, but you might get more gaming done if it was...smaller, and portable perhaps....yeah, that's the ticket! Maybe you just need a PSP!" That's just wrong.

Norma Irish
via e-mail

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WHAT'S IN A "K"

You said in your *Kingdom Hearts II* preview that Sora was looking for Rikku from *FFX*. He's not looking for Rikku, but Riku, a male character from *Kingdom Hearts*—or he's made a new special friend, in which case you da man, Sora.

I'm sure the other hundreds of thousands of fanboys will let you know too, but I just wanted to write you guys for a change.

James LeJeune
via e-mail

Oh, James. Thank you for being the one civil voice out of the roughly 2.3 gazillion letters we got about this gaffe. You're absolutely right. By way of restitution, we will be submitting Scooter to daily floggings to ensure he reads future game info sheets more closely. Though we do have to say: Squenix, naming a character Riku in a crossover game known for cameos from the *FF* series is just cruel.

GO BANANA!

I'm curious about the PlayStation 3 boomerang controller. Are they actually thinking of making that ugly piece of creation? And as for it being wireless...please don't. It's a mess waiting to happen. I blame it all on Immersion, if it wasn't

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARDS

PS3: START YOUR ENGINES

You could smell the anticipation the day of Sony's E3 press conference; it was even permeating our usually scent-free message boards. And once the conference ended and the assets hit the Internet, the place just exploded with speculation and wonder.

Unusualgroove36 asked, "Which trailer to you looks to show off PS3's power the best? I was thinking *Killzone* until I saw the *Motorstorm* video and oh...MY...GOSH!! It looks totally amazing!! Is that the in-game engine? If it is, I don't see anything from the Xbox 360 videos getting anywhere close to touching it."

BombaJoe concurred, saying, "I seriously just busted a nut all over myself after seeing footage of *Killzone* on PS3. That game looks f***in' SICK! No joke."

Spideybuddy revealed his unusual anatomical construction by saying, "My jaw literally HIT THE FLOOR when I saw the *Gran Turismo 5* film."

Tenshi_me was a bit more guarded. "If Sony can pull off something that can match Xbox Live then I'll be a happy camper."

OhJTBehaaave wasn't the first to ask, "Will the Xbox 360 be the next Dreamcast? An early launch to get a jump on the competition...but not many games to blow gamers away at launch. All the while Sony's not that far off with the PS3 and somehow generating a buzz for PS3 that will have gamers keeping their money in the bank until 2006 for their system. 360 needs more than FPSes if it wants to challenge PS3."

HORSESHOES AND HAND GRENADES

The one near-universal reaction, however, was one of revulsion to the new controller prototype (which is, we'll point out again, *just a prototype*). Here are some of our favorite one-liners.

LRNiMbUs: "If you ever get tired of playing videogames there's always horseshoes."

Fox-Brutus: "There is no way on God's green earth that they can send a controller out looking like that!"

Edgerunner: "Why reinvent the wheel? Everyone knows they have one of the tightest controller layouts and they've 'boomerangized' (patent pending) it?"

Botkiller: "I would be completely psyched for this thing if it wasn't for the fact that I'd have to play with a banana."

Looksocool seemed to be the only one to offer a positive perspective: "That new controller is gonna fit in your hand like you won't believe. I'd imagine it isn't rounded all the way, and will fit perfectly in the natural curve of your hands, like a glowcock."

Disconnected -Hyper-
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H! YEAH!
YEAH! YEAH!
STIC!
FANTASTIC!

CORRECTION

Why do you gnomes hate Square? Why did you replace our *Advent Children* pics with *Dirge of Cerberus* shots and our *FF Tactics* pic with a *Tactics Advance* shot last month? WHY?

for them, the controller probably would have been untouched.

Also, I read your article about *Warhawk*. I miss that game. It was the best flight simulator for its time for the first PlayStation. It would be nice to see that game redone for the next PlayStation.

Arnold Shortsle
via e-mail

The controller will definitely be wireless, and we say it's about time. But we're totally with you on the crazy-ass boomerang-banana design. We asked a Sony spokeswoman whether that was the final design, and she laughed and laughed. "It's just a prototype," she said. Thank God.

With regard to *Warhawk*—flip on down to page 60 for our PS3 coverage, and you'll find your prayers have been answered. Yeah, we're psychic.

PRICE MATTERS

I read an article titled "The PS3 will be priced under $500.00?" today. I can only say this: NO CONSOLE HAS EVER BEEN SUCCESSFUL WHEN PRICED ABOVE THE $299.99 SWEET SPOT! Sony isn't stupid. The price will not go beyond $349.99, especially when faced with a $299.99 Xbox 360 and the Nintendo Revolution, which will almost certainly be priced below $300.00. If Sony goes beyond that price point ($349.99), then we WILL be looking at a new market leader in Microsoft.

Joe Dennis
via e-mail

We admire your enthusiasm, sir, but we must point out that the Sega Saturn—certainly a successful system, though certainly not as successful as the PS1—launched at $400. Of course, with the 3DO, Neo-Geo, TurboGrafx-CD, and Philips CDi all launching well above $300, your point is well taken.

DANCE, MONKEY BOY, DANCE!

I think I speak for a lot of people when I say that *In the Groove* is what the rhythm-action genre needed. Not because *Dance Dance Revolution* is too simple, or too small, or anything like that. *DDR* just does not use good music for this type of game. It's not that the steps aren't hard enough, they're just not good enough. Some of the steps found in *DDR* are just nonsense and nearly nothing corresponds to the music.

This is what creates the appeal *ITG* has for hardcore fans. The first thing an enthusiast will look for in a song is QUALITY. Give me something that can make hard songs, but have the steps go with the music. Make it so that if I'm playing on a metal pad, the noise my feet are making sounds like the song. That's what *DDR* has failed to do in more than 10 tries, and *ITG* got it on its first attempt. This is why so many enthusiasts will live for this game.

Peter Something
via e-mail

Yep, exactly.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

I'm sending you this letter to inform your readers of an epidemic that is sweeping the nation.

But first, a quick history lesson. The United States Congress instituted the much needed Ninja Protection Act in 1754. You see, way back in "olden times," the Indians would only hunt the ninja in moderation. They would take only what they had to have to survive in the harsh Kansas landscape. But soon cowboys came to Kansas to hunt the ninja for sport, cowboys like Nodnarb "The Ninja Skinner" Nog and Bakoj "The Testicle Taker" Narbes. It would only be a matter of time before the ninja was all but extinct. So a group of people called T.E.C.M.O. gathered together to defend the ninja by making sure people were well educated about this fading species and its very important role in our ecosystem. But some feared T.E.C.M.O.'s outdated practices would catch up with them and eventually end the existence of this magnificent creature.

But in all seriousness...there are not enough GOOD Ninja games out there. As a matter of fact...I can count them on one hand: *Ninja Gaiden*!! That's pretty much the end of my rant.

GiveMeSumMilla
via e-mail

Touché. «

ASK US ANYTHING
AND WE'LL ANSWER

ROOTING FOR SQUARE

Q I have heard from my Xbox-loving friends that Square Enix is moving to Xbox. I don't believe it, but I must know. Is Square Enix moving to Xbox? Will I have to buy an Xbox to continue playing my beloved *Final Fantasy*?

Ryan Schroeder
vie e-mail

A Yes and no. Yes, Square is now developing games for Xbox, most notably *Final Fantasy XI*. But the company's not forsaking PlayStation to do it; we'll still see Square games aplenty.

PLAY DATE

Q My friend's parents are really strict and because my friend got a B on a report card, he lost his computer and gaming privileges. What can I do to help him?

name withheld
via e-mail

A Sounds like it's time for you to invite your friend over for some quality multiplayer time. May we suggest *TimeSplitters 3, Freedom Fighters*, or *Hot Shots Golf* for some enjoyable splitscreen?

FIGHT THE POWER

Q If John Davison and Tom Byron got in a fight, who would win?

Mr. Pants
via e-mail

A John's got the reach but Tom's got the moves. It looks like pretty even money to us.

SOUND ADVICE

Q My friend and I have been fighting about the PSP's speaker—where is it? I have been thinking it is near the bottom and my friend thinks it is right behind the screen. I don't really think there is a whole lot of room for it there, but I have been wrong a lot of the time.

DragonMaster
via e-mail

A Not this time. See those two holes on the bottom of your PSP (near the serial number)? That's where the sound comes out.

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BLOG OF THE MONTH

"I don't play games because they're fun. I play games because I enjoy them, and believe me when I say that those are two very different things. Allow me to provide this example: Are movies fun to watch? Is it fun for the viewer to sit down and watch [while] other people are doing everything? Not really, but people enjoy them.

"I define 'fun' as an active experience, such as riding a roller coaster or playing laser tag; watching a film or playing a game is passive. There are exceptions to this rule, but for the most part, that's how it is.

"Therefore, if I am not a gamer who craves fun in her games, then what do I crave? Innovation. I do seek games that break new ground, because that means I'll enjoy them more. I want games that'll show me something no one's ever done before; I want games that raise the bar in terms of new ideas.

Sarah Kelly
tigergal.1UP.com

CLUB OF THE MONTH

"Share info on sales, bargains, and price drops on any and all games. Let's help one another get more game for our buck."

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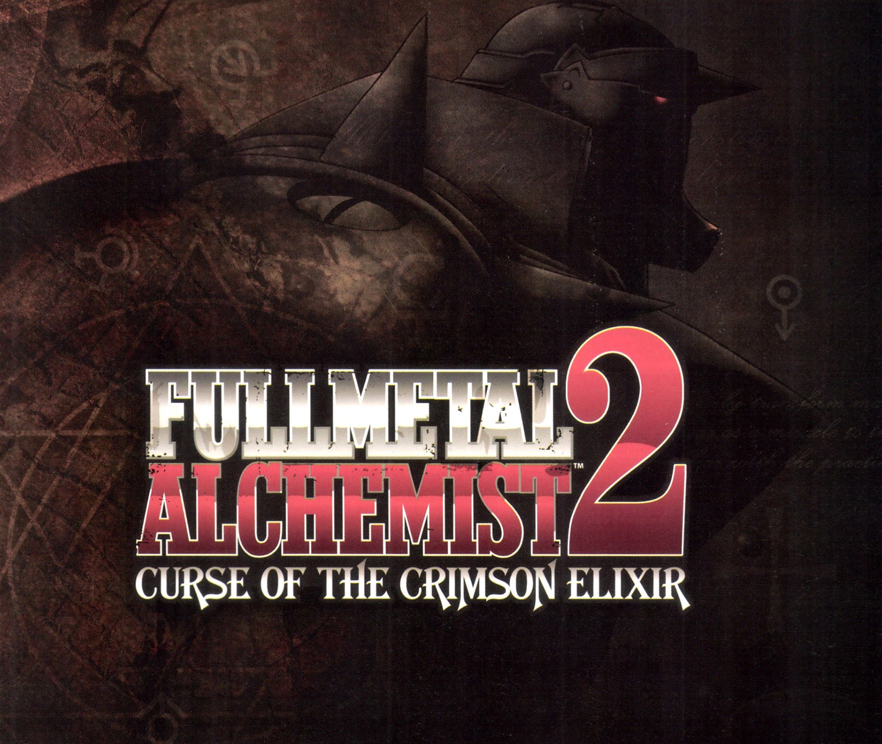

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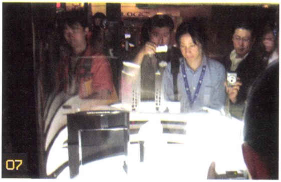
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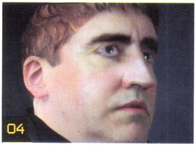
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HYPE

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PLAYSTATION 3

CRAZY BATWING CONTROLLER AND ALL

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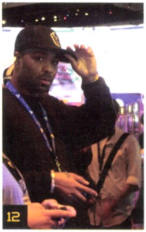
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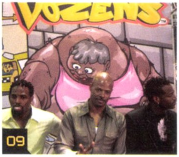

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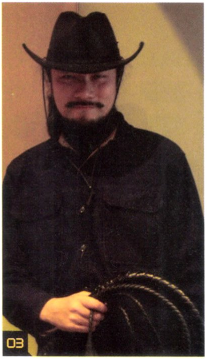
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E3 EXTRAVAGANZA

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS YEAR'S ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT EXPO

We were there, and you probably weren't. Take a look at a few things from E3 that made us clench our teeth with glee as we waded through the unwashed masses—no, really, some of them were unwashed. That part of it was terrible.

1 Our first stop was the Sony E3 press conference, where we saw Hideo Kojima chatting it up with Capcom's Atsushi Inaba. Perhaps they were discussing their affinity for wolves or how there was a distinct lack of hot dogs at the event. Either way, it was cool to see two of the most creative minds in the industry standing side by side.

2 Inside the theater housing the conference, the crowd was abuzz with rumors. Almost everyone knew at this point that the PS3 would be there in some form or another, but nobody was really expecting Sony to show so many different demos, let alone the actual hardware.

3 Konami's Koji Igarashi (of *Castlevania* fame) posed outside the theater. We'd be lying if we said we weren't a little disturbed that he was let into the conference with an actual bullwhip (or the cowboy hat, for that matter), but we were even more disturbed by the lack of *Castlevania* on PS3.

4 After an hour or so of explaining how Tflops can bake cakes and will eventually rule the world, Phil Harrison, Sony Europe's executive vice president of development, presented Alfred Molina's head. Yes, a giant Alfred Molina head made entirely on the PS3 using data from the *Spider-Man 2* film.

5 At the very end of Sony's press conference, Ken Kutaragi, the father of the PlayStation, stood triumphantly on the stage, showing his new child to the entire world. While the hardware looks slick, we can't say we care for the use of the *Spider-Man* font—it reeks of synergy.

6 E3 finally started. A variety of different people rushed to the kiosks to play all of the upcoming games. Here, a stormtrooper completely neglected his duties to play a few minutes of *Dragon Quest VIII*.

7 Judging by the line and the wait to get into this area, you might've thought Sony was giving away PlayStation 3s. Alas, that was not the case. All showgoers got was a quick glimpse of the PlayStation 3 hardware circling around on a small platform, but it was the first chance for many to see it in person.

8 The PSP took up a big portion of the Sony booth thanks in large part to these awesome bubble chairs. Nothing was quite like sitting in one of them to relax and take in some *SOCOM* or *Daxter* after a long day of walking the show floor.

9 Someone had just told Shawn Wayans, who was accompanied by his brothers Keenan and Marlon, that Santa Claus isn't real, the Easter Bunny is a fraud, and the game that he and his family members are trying to push on us is one that no one really cares about. How about bringing some *In Living Color* to the PSP instead?

YOU MIGHT'VE THOUGHT SONY WAS GIVING AWAY PLAYSTATION 3s.

10 We were really excited to hear that there would be an enormous katamari on the show floor of this year's E3, but we were a little let down when we actually dropped by Namco's booth to check it out. Where are all of the schoolchildren, cows, cars, and trees? The King of All Cosmos is not pleased.

11 How intense is *SOCOM 3*? So intense that this guy had to tear off the sleeves off his shirt and fashion a bandana out of them to absorb the generous amounts of sweat that poured down his furrowed brow as he was being sniped from over 100 yards away—or something like that.

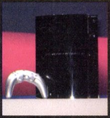
12 Here, Method Man was either tipping his hat as a nice gesture for our camera, or he was giving a signal to his bodyguard to get rid of the guy who was trying to take his picture while he was trying to get in a game of *Madden NFL 06*. Whatever the case, it didn't detract from that awfully nice, iced-out bracelet he was sporting. «

BEST IN SHOW

OPM'S E3 HIGHLIGHTS

Members of Team *OPM* pick their five favorite things from this year's show.

Even jaded professionals like us can can find things to get excited about at the biggest videogame convention in the world. In no particular order, here's some of the stuff we loved.

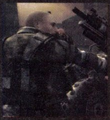


TOM

- PlayStation 3
- *Okami* (PS2)
- *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* (GC)
- *Rise of Nations 2* (PC)
- *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories* (PSP)

DANA

- *Spore* (PC)
- *Okami* (PS2)
- PlayStation 3
- *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories* (PSP)
- Watching electronic circles come out of J Allard's butt as he sat on the light-up floor at the Microsoft press conference

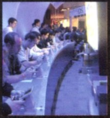


JOE

- *Killzone* (PS3)
- *Virtua Tennis* (PSP)
- The manifold jokes about that ridiculous-looking PS3 concept controller. GO BANANA!
- Hearing the Xbox 360 referred to as "Dreamcast 2"
- Winning a hand off poker legend Annie Duke at the Crave booth

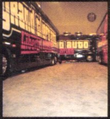
SCOOTER

- *FFVII* intro remake (PS3)
- *Okami* (PS2)
- *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess* (GC)
- *Kingdom Hearts II* (PS2)
- *MGS3: Subsistence* (PS2), since the *MGS4* trailer was just a teaser



GIANCARLO

- Seeing Yuji Naka chauffeur other members of Sega
- Witnessing Ken Kutaragi's awesome dancing skills
- *Okami* (PS2)
- Shoulder-checking one of the many jerks on the show floor
- PlayStation 3



RYAN

- Meeting Hideo Kojima
- Chilling inside the Rockstar booth eating Goldfish away from the chaos out on the floor
- Seeing Tone Loc along with the rest of the amazing lineup perform at the Sony party
- Playing *Metal Gear Acid* in my hotel room before going to bed
- Loosing my hoody on the plane

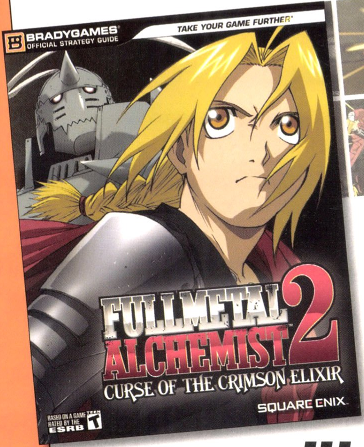
ALEJANDRO

- Kentia Hall
- Seeing the Killers at the Microsoft party
- Seeing Camp Freddy play at the Sony party
- Actually being able to get into the Sony party
- Free drinks

LOGAN

- *The Matrix: Path of Neo* (PS2)
- EA's Xbox 360 video screens
- *Virtua Tennis* (PSP)
- LucasArts' booth entrance (it looked like the interior of *Tantive IV*...)
- *Quake Wars* (PC)

Send your enemies to their maker....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OFFICIAL STRATEGY GUIDE
TAKE YOUR GAME FURTHER
FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST 2
CURSE OF THE CRIMSON ELIXIR
SQUARE ENIX
BASED ON A GAME RATED BY THE ESRB
TEEN
T

10 HIT!
13 HIT!

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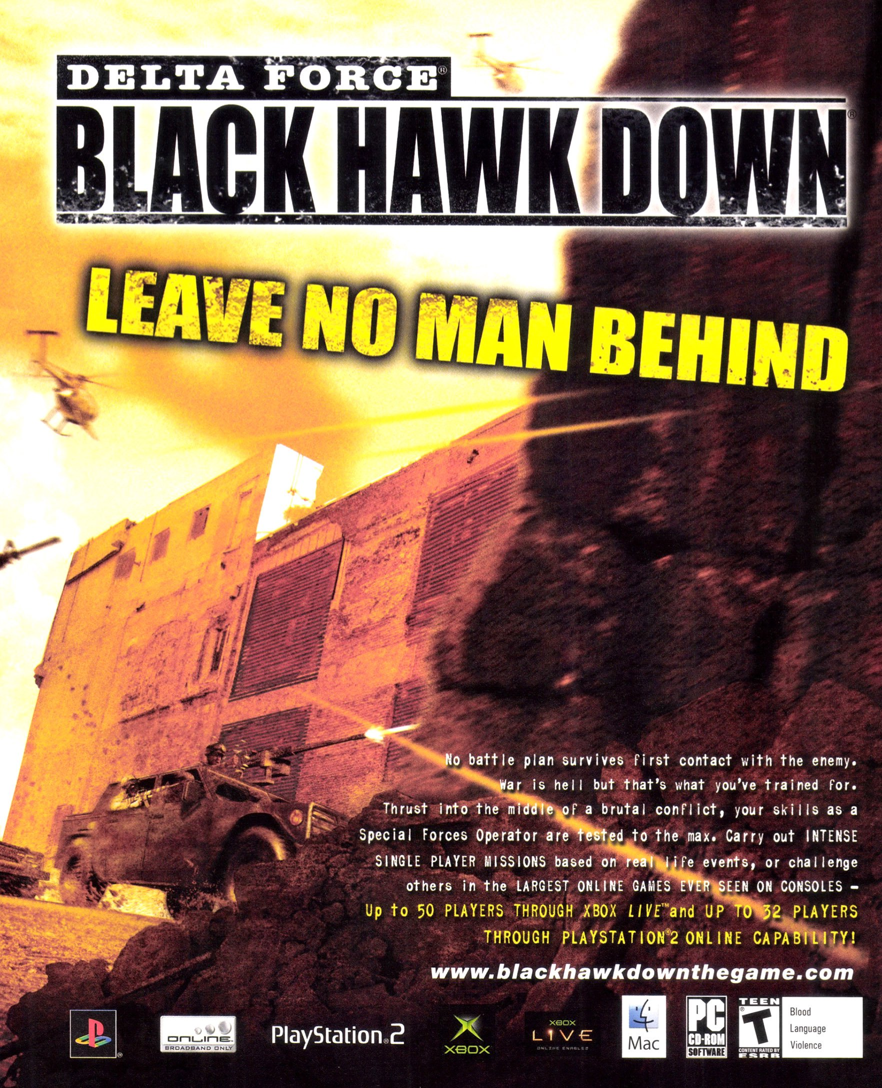

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Blood
Language
Violence

!

Kojima described Kojima Productions as the result of a merger between Konami Computer Entertainment Japan and Konami Corporation. We're pretty sure the companies didn't merge, but that Kojima took his talented personnel from both divisions and put them all under his new roof.

METAL GEAR MANIAC

KOJIMA GOES NUTS WITH HIS NEW COMPANY

Hideo Kojima has totally made it. If being a world-renowned designer wasn't enough, he celebrated his 10th anniversary of being a Konami employee by creating his own studio, Kojima Productions. Now that he runs a company that has his name in the title, he's announced three new and surprising projects as the first offerings from his new venture.

METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SUBSISTENCE

ONLINE SNAKE EATING!

We'd fill this space with all sorts of jibber-jabber about how Kojima is adding tons of fun to *MGS3*, and hence making a pretty awesome game shoot into another stratosphere of awesomeness. But we instead decided to have Kojima himself explain the conception and the two biggest additions to *Subsistence*:

"Originally I didn't have any plans for *MGS3: Subsistence*, because if we start creating that, we have to accept spending six months or maybe as much as a year on that project. When we released [*MGS3*] in Europe, I did kind of a tour around Europe. At that time I heard a lot of feedback from the press, saying that they wanted something similar to *Substance*. So I went back to Japan and started this project.

"For *MGS3*, when I was creating it, we received many comments about [how] the camera is an old-type camera. The view is of an old type, but I thought that *MGS 1, 2, 3* is a trilogy, so I wanted to keep that camera to keep the trilogy in accordance. But actually, when we created *MGS3*, we were experimenting with a new 3D camera. I have a weakness for 3D sickness, so I wanted to overcome that, but I also wanted to experience, in *MGS4*, a new 3D camera that doesn't make me sick. We're experimenting with this, and we thought, 'OK, if we're going to have *MGS3: Subsistence* as a complete package, why don't we put a 3D camera in *MGS3: Subsistence* as well?'

"In addition to the camera experiment, the second thing is the online element. We've been experimenting a long time to create *Metal Gear* online, but we never had the chance or opportunity to present this to users. So we thought, 'OK, *Subsistence* is a great opportunity for that as well, the same as the camera. Why don't we put the online in, like a test, and see how the market users react?'

"So there are two modes to this online mode—one is team versus team, the other is Snake versus the enemy. In enemy-versus-enemy mode, it's like your typical everyday first-person shooter that you can find online. It's similar to *Counter-Strike*, meaning you form a team [to fight] against members of another team. But the second game is much closer to the *Metal Gear* world. It'll be one versus a team; one person will be Snake, sneaking around, and the others will be the enemies trying to look for Snake. There are many goals according to each map, so you'll have both *MGS* experiences in this mode.

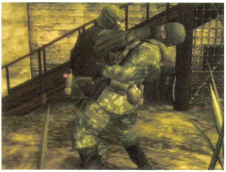
"I HAVE A WEAKNESS FOR 3D SICKNESS."

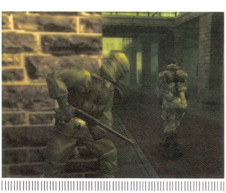
"I think, if you play as Snake, there won't be anything odd about it. You'll naturally be able to play it, because you've been playing Snake in past *Metal Gear* games. But if you become the enemy player, you'll have a totally new experience because you'll know what you've done to these enemy players in the past when you've been playing the *Metal Gear* series. You'll be in the same situation, in his boots.

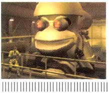
"Like, for instance, one example if you're playing as an enemy: You know the whole idle book part, where there's a sexy magazine that the enemy has to look at in the game? When you're playing in the online mode as the enemy, the same thing happens. Even if you try to resist, the camera pans away to that book. You'll get to know the feeling of what the enemy has felt in the past. There will also be the famous stalking from behind and cutting throats; you'll get to experience that as well. If you're playing as a soldier in the first-person mode, you cannot see your back, so if you're not watching carefully, all of a sudden you see a hand with a knife, just like the enemies have been seeing.

"There's also the famous cardboard box, so when you play as an enemy and you see this cardboard box, you'll be frightened because you never know when Snake is hiding [in it]. You've been doing this to the enemies in the past, so the enemies will not be able to spot Snake until they get very close. But then Snake might pop up and you might get killed. During lunchtime among the team, now it's a big joke because every time someone sees a cardboard box, everyone just shoots the rocket launcher and destroys everything."

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Kojima Productions **Release** TBA

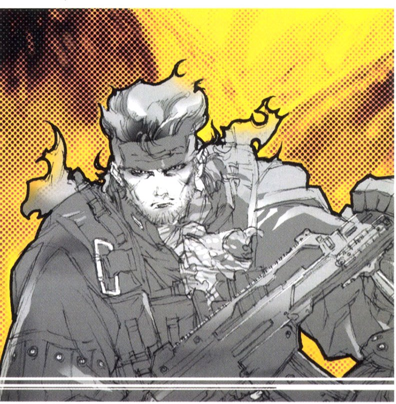






MORE SUBSISTENCE

In addition to the heavies of online multiplayer and a third-person camera, *Subsistence* is packed with a bunch of little extras. Like a demo theater that lets you view all the cut-scenes. And more Snake vs. Ape levels. Hooray for apes!



PSP

METAL GEAR ACID 2

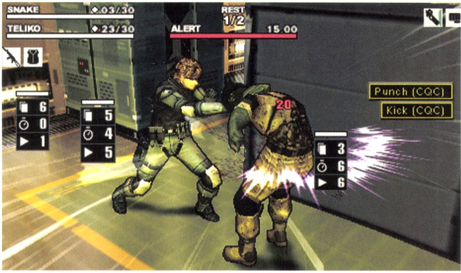
MANGA METAL GEAR CARDS!

Despite many gamers strongly voicing their disappointment that the PSP *Metal Gear* game was a turn-based strategy game with cards, *Metal Gear Acid* did just fine on the sales charts. Probably because once people got over the initial shock that Snake takes turns to fight baddies, they realized that it's actually a damn good game once you get used to it. So don't be surprised that Kojima Productions is putting out a sequel with even more zany *Metal Gear*–themed cards, another crazy story, and a totally new art style.

Director Shinta Nojiri was awfully cagey about details for the next game. The first *MGA* had a totally bizarre story that outdid *MGS2* in terms of weird twists coming at you, and when asked to talk a bit about the story for *MGA2*, Nojiri would only comment that "Snake" is the hero again (note that he didn't say "Solid Snake"). Additionally, there will be a new heroine (which then begs the question, what happened to Teliko from *MGA*?).

What Nojiri *was* willing to talk about was the new cel-shaded look for *MGA2*. Funnily enough, this change to the graphic style seems to be part of an overall mandate, as Nojiri has commented that it came about because of Kojima's desire for all three games from Kojima Productions to change things up. Kojima himself has commented that the PSP is a fashion item and that *MGA* preserved too much of the cold, sterile look of previous *Metal Gear* games. Hence, the team redid *MGA2* with brightly colored cel-shaded art to make it resemble a typical Japanese manga and to follow the PSP's "fashion item" design sensibilities.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Kojima Productions **Release** Fall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REST 1/2
ALERT 15.00
Punch (CQC)
Kick (CQC)
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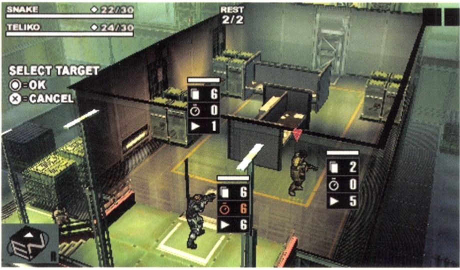
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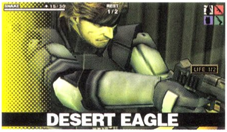
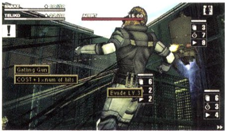
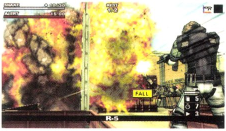
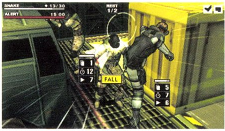

LIFE 1/2
DESERT EAGLE


Gatling Gun
Evade LV 3

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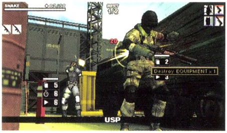
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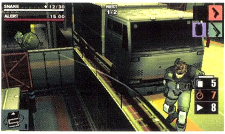
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ALERT 15.00
REST 1/2

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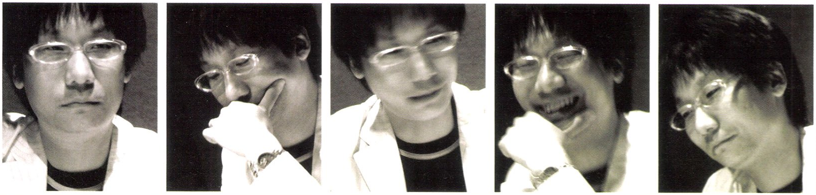


METAL GEAR SOLID 4

NO PLACE FOR HIDEO? NO REPLACEMENT FOR HIDEO!

While Kojima Productions is busy polishing up *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*, Hideo Kojima has announced the first *MGS* game for PS3: *Metal Gear Solid 4*. Because the game is so far off, Kojima has only confirmed a handful of details. First off, he triumphantly announced that he is taking the director's chair for *MGS4*, despite earlier teasing that he was stepping away from it.

He then summarized his central concept for the game as "No place to hide," which strongly implies two possibilities: *MGS4* either takes place in a barren desert, or it takes place in a crowded metropolitan area such as New York, where Snake's hiding skills would be crippled because there are people everywhere.

Kojima has also confirmed that *MGS4*'s setting is the future world seen in *MGS2* and that the game is essentially a true sequel to *MGS2*, which was left dangling a bit. Since *MGS3* took a sudden turn away from *MGS2*—being a prequel set in the '60s—we asked Kojima about his philosophy in deciding what kinds of stories he tells. After we mentioned that George Lucas once said that he tells the story he wants to tell regardless of what anyone else thinks, we asked Kojima if he feels this way as well. His answer: "Well, for stories [found in] novels or even movies, I think that philosophy will work. However, this is a game, meaning it's more interactive, it's more like something that you do with the users. So for the settings, the environment, maybe the world, or even some parts of the story, yes, I do have the liberty to be very creative and tell what message I want and so on. But it's a game, so we have to listen to users—we have to listen to what the users want, what kind of game they want to play. For instance, nobody will buy a car if it won't move like a car, [and] it's the same for games. I think we have to be careful and listen to the users' feedback as much as possible.

"So, for instance, I assure you that in *Metal Gear Solid 4*, we're not going to be stubborn and keep that camera view that we had in the trilogy [which Kojima refers to as the bird's eye camera]. I know that this is a trend, the 3D-type [third-person] camera and first-person camera. I'm not going to push [the bird's eye camera] in the gameplay part [of *MGS4*] because I've been receiving so much feedback that users want the current trend in cameras—it's just what the users [are used to] seeing or watching.... So I'll consider the users' feedback really seriously.

"But since I'm a game designer, I have the authorial side [in regard to] the story or the theme that I want to give, the message [I want to give] to the users. In that case, I have the liberty to select the theme or the story or plot behind it. But other than that, it really is the fans' voice."

Kojima also confirmed that Solid Snake will be in the new game. He mentions that popular characters from the whole *MGS* saga will be in *MGS4*, specifically naming Meryl, Otacon, and Ocelot. Of course, that could just mean Snake sees a picture of Meryl and reminisces about the time they took a sweet ride down the tunnel of nuclear love.

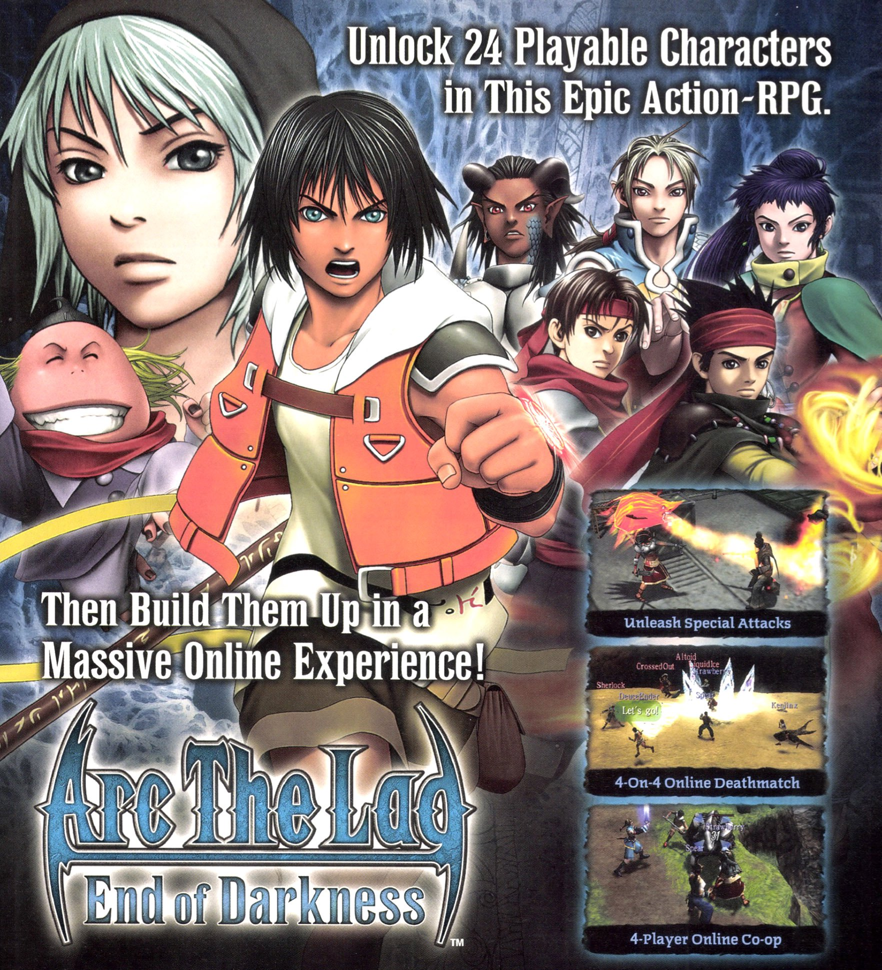
Since *MGS4* is a PS3 title, we asked Kojima for his thoughts on what he wants to do with the PS3 hardware, and he gave us this incredibly interesting answer: "Up until today, creating games was almost like creating a set for the movies. You have the set in a studio, but a set is a set—there's nothing behind that; it's hollow. And also, everything is completely fake. It looks pretty, it looks like the real thing, but it actually isn't.

> "I WOULD NOT CREATE A BIGGER FAKE JUNGLE."

"Some creators might think, 'How can I expand my set and make it bigger? How can I make it a bigger world?' [That's] what a typical creator would think. Even if you do that, though, I think that's not meaningful, because a set is a set. If you want to recreate a jungle on a next-gen platform...the trees are still 'plastic,' everything is still a fake; although you try and enhance the look of the jungle, everything is a fake.

"If we keep doing that, we won't go to the next level, [while] people's expectations will. Everyone asks, 'What's the next level with this next-gen platform?' I would like to go after the 'real,' meaning that if I were to create a jungle on the next-gen platform, I would not create a bigger fake jungle, I would instead perhaps make it smaller. But I would [create] trees with life inside, put life in them. [It would be sort of like] life programming, so if you water the tree, it will grow, but if you don't water the tree, it might die. Then I would ask the users, why not play hide-and-seek in that real jungle?" «

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Kojima Productions **Release** TBA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Strawberry
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Arc The Lad
End of Darkness
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TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Mild Language
Violence

PlayStation®2

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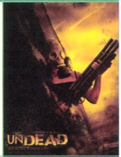
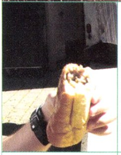
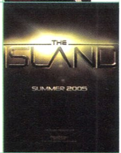
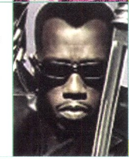
JULY 2K5

THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					01 Today, you get movies like Aussie zombie flick ***Undead*** and Martin Lawrence's ***Rebound***. Too bad they don't fuse into one flick where a zombified-b-ball-playing Lawrence gets shot in the face 72 times.	
	04 **Fourth of July**! Huzzah! A perfect day to sit back, eat fired-up meat, drink a cold one, and watch Will Smith and Jeff Goldblum use a Mac to save our planet. Cheers to you! We love America!	 [NEW GAMES]	06 ***Killer 7*** is out. You can read GC's opinion about it on page 88, but we at the Calendar Committee have to say that it's better to watch someone else play it rather than play it yourself. Go con a friend!	07	08 Some fellows on staff would rather watch Jennifer Connelly get wet in ***Dark Water*** over the sad ***Fantastic Four***, which had to have its ending redone because ***The Incredibles*** upped the ante.	
10 **Wyoming**, what would we do without you? If you didn't **become a state today back in 1890**, we'd have no JC Penney, no Yellowstone, and no license plates with a man on a bucking bronco.	YEEEEEEHAA 	12 Oh man, look at this tub of games here! ***NCAA Football 06, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Top Spin, FlatOut, Fullmetal Alchemist 2***, and ***Flipnic*** all want homes. [NEW GAMES]		14 The French version of the Fourth of July, **Bastille Day**, is today. It commemorates the day when brave frogs stormed the Bastille prison in order to get a chance to slap the king of France on the face.	15 Johnny Depp, you're such a rapscallion! Gene Wilder might be very annoyed and angry at you for starring in ***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory***, but we salute your absolute nuttiness.	
17 **Disneyland opened today in 1955**. This magical land of wonder and animatronics is still kicking it today, except instead of candy and roses, the lines are filled with obese kids and sweat.		19 Whether you have a salary, an allowance, or kleptomania, you can get ***Colosseum: Road to Freedom, Black Hawk Down***, and ***Jackie Chan Adventures*** today. [NEW GAMES]		21 Pour one down for **Ernest Hemingway, who was born on this day in freakin' 1899**. Wrestle a bull, punch a pig, shoot a whale—just don't bring up the "Ernestine Hemingway" incident.	22 Rather than watch another remake (***Bad News Bears***), we'll opt for ***The Island***. Yeah, it's more stupid Michael Bay, but we like Scarlett Johansson, Ewan, and sweeping shots of hangars.	
24/31 **JLo** and **Barry Bonds** are having a sweet **b'day bash on the 24th**, while **JK Rowling** will host a Hogwarts-style **birthday on the 31st**. Also, **Wesley Snipes** will crash Hogwarts.		26 Do you keep your money on your mind and your mind on your money? Then mayhap you'll purchase either ***Makai Kingdom*** or ***Outlaw Tennis***. Snoop would be proud. [NEW GAMES]		28 Today is **National Milk Chocolate Day**, so break out that weird fantasy of covering your annoying neighbor in delicious Nestle Quik and then seeing what happens when he gets near an anthill!	29 ***Stealth*** comes out, which you've probably never heard of unless you watched all the trailers on your PSP demo disc. To us it sounds like the ugly baby of ***Terminator*** and ***Top Gun***.	

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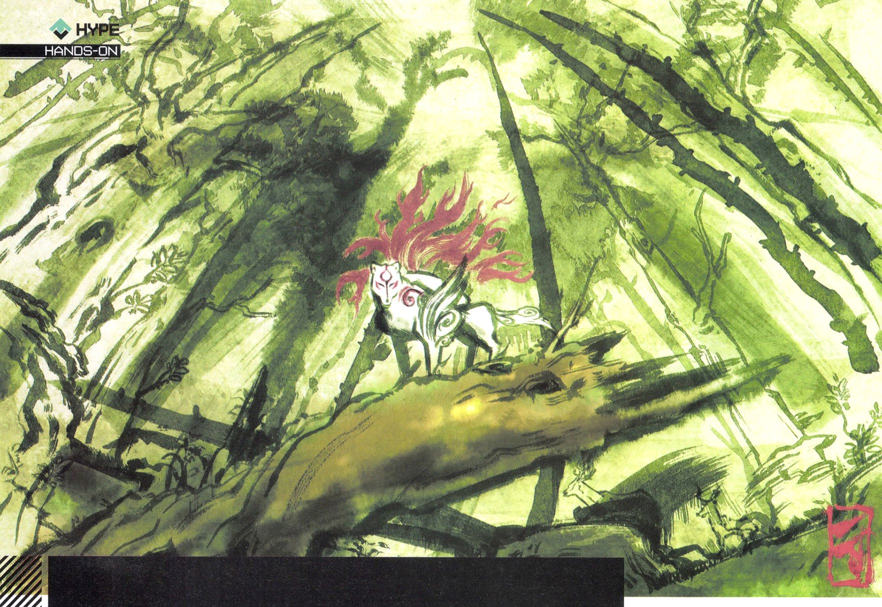


OKAMI

THE PRETTIEST GAME YOU'LL EVER PAINT

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then the preview on this page should take you at least as long as a novella would to get through. One of the most stunning games we got to see at E3, *Okami* is the latest brainchild from Atsushi Inaba, who previously imagineered *Steel Battalion* (that $200 Xbox mech game with the crazy controller) and *Viewtiful Joe*.

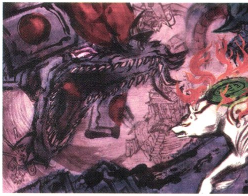
So how did a wolf that looks like it stepped out of a traditional Japanese painting become the subject of Inaba's latest venture? Blame it on the technical deficiencies of the PS2. Originally, Inaba was seeking to make a photo-realistic game after he finished *Viewtiful Joe*, but once he realized that he would not be able to achieve the quality he was striving for with the current generation of hardware, he scrapped that idea. As he and his friend were brainstorming alternate possibilities, his friend (who was doodling on a notebook) came up with a sketch that eventually became *Okami*'s main character, Amaterasu.

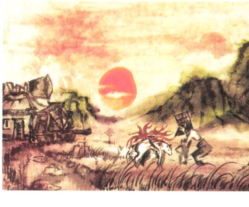
The basic premise of the game is that Amaterasu has been sent to earth in the form of a wolf to restore order to Japan. She's guided along her way by the voice of Issun, whose dialogue is communicated through in-game text. While Issun gushes if you are performing well, screw up enough times and Issun will take on a disdainful tone not dissimilar to *Katamari Damacy*'s King of All Cosmos.

The game's appearance is unique—it's like watching a painting in motion as Amaterasu darts around the landscape, flowers and plants springing from beneath her feet as she runs. Happily, the gameplay mechanic ties in with the game's look. Most of the action in the game is actually dictated by your skill with a paintbrush. For example, we came to a bridge that had collapsed, so we flipped into drawing mode, used our celestial brush, and filled in the missing portion. The celestial brush can also be used in combat. While we could head-butt the first batch of enemies we came across, it was also possible to go to drawing mode, paint a slash through the center of an enemy, and then return to action mode and watch him split in half. The pen always gets a big rep for being mightier than the sword, but in the case of *Okami*, we'd have to say our money's on the brush. «

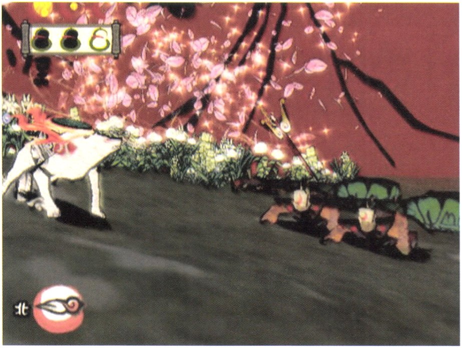
THIRST FOR INFO

This game evokes classic Japanese culture on multiple levels, even down to the paper texture that is visible on Amaterasu. That's no accident—Inaba is hoping that *Okami* will spark interest in learning more about traditional literature and arts.



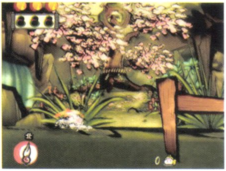


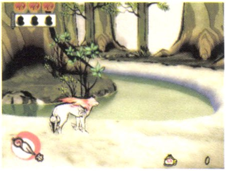
Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Clover Studio **Release** 2006

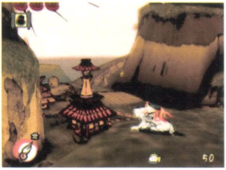


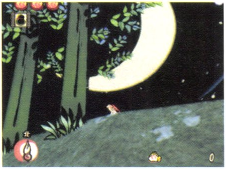
ATSUSHI INABA_PRODUCER

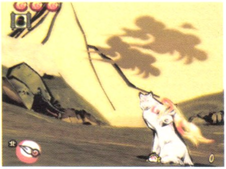
"THE GAME'S WHOLE THEME IS OF NATURE."





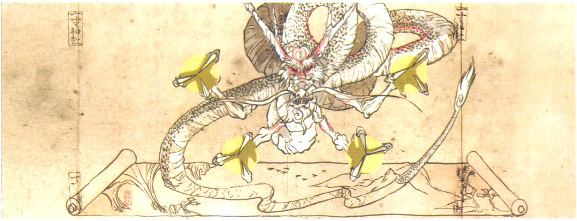


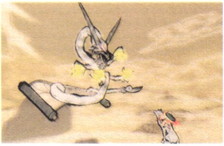




CULTURE CLUB

- Amaterasu is the name of the Shinto sun goddess; it means "she who shines in heaven."
- The Japanese word for "wolf" is "okami."
- "Yamato-e" is the general term used to describe Japanese-style painting.



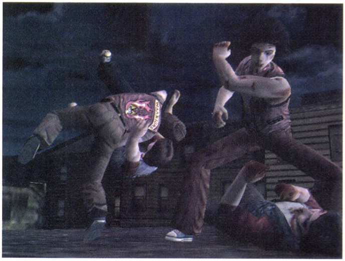


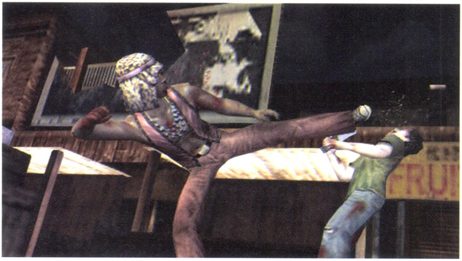
DIFFERENT STROKES

You'll learn several types of brush strokes as the game progresses. Though we saw only two—one to fill in empty spaces and one to slice items in half—there will be 13 total.

THE WARRIORS

THE FILM MAY BE LAST CENTURY, BUT THE GAME IS SO TODAY





The recent trend of basing games on old films may seem either strange or brilliant: Strange because the film choices can be just a little, well, unexpected. Brilliant because film classics have built-in recognition without the astronomical licensing fees of their more contemporary brethren.

Which is why there are games like Electronic Arts' *From Russia With Love* and *The Godfather*, Majesco's *Jaws Unleashed*, and Vivendi's *Scarface* coming soon. The films upon which these games are based were in theaters in 1963, 1972, 1975, and 1983, respectively, and to anyone over 40 years old, they're undeniable film gems. But to anyone under 40, there might be a glint of recognition but certainly no starry-eyed nostalgia. (It's an *OPM* fact: 82 percent of our readers are under 35).

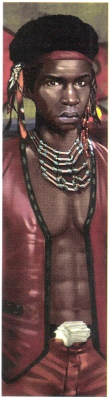
Of course, the age of the film isn't the point. The actual film itself may not necessarily be the point either. What really appears to be happening is that the old films are being mined for artistic inspiration—basically, they're just interesting game premises (and if you happen to recognize them, all the better). Thus, the *Jaws* game, which bears little resemblance to the Spielberg classic, is about guiding a shark around the ocean to eat the bloody bejesus out of unsuspecting human folk. *The Godfather* is really a *GTA*-like game based on the 1940s crime syndicate, and *From Russia With Love* is simply the next cool Bond action-adventure with an excuse to meet Sean Connery. *Scarface*, also *GTA*-like, tells the bloody tale of an out-of-control drug lord. Neat!

Rockstar's entry in the classic-films-to-games category is *The Warriors*, one of the most exciting and disturbing flicks of 1979. While it wasn't a big hit, over the years it has built a convincing cult following. *The Warriors* tells the story of a street gang from Coney Island that is framed for the assassination of über gang leader Cyrus after his failed attempt to unite all the gangs of New York (rationalizing that there were, after all, over 100,000 gang members and only 20,000 cops). As marked men, the Warriors must fight their way back to their turf, embarking on an epic journey that takes them through the territories of enemy—and often bizarre—gangs, such as the baseball-bat-wielding Furies, the not-so-subtle Lizzies, and the grungy Orphans.

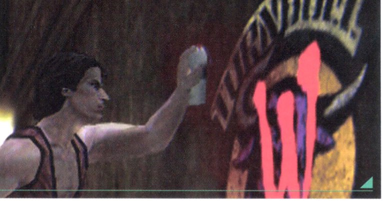
If this sounds like a strong premise for an intense group brawler, Rockstar's way ahead of you. *The Warriors* is a single-player, no-holds-barred gangbanging bash-em-up that expands upon the film's story line, letting you play as each of the nine Warriors (Cleon, Ajax, Swan, Snow, Cochise, Cowboy, Rembrandt, Vermin, and Fox) in dozens of scenarios. Issuing your War Chief commands—including the adorable-sounding "trash everything in sight"—you'll lead your Warriors through the streets of New York, fighting hordes of enemies in gritty interactive environments. More than a button masher, *The Warriors* features a bevy of moves including diving and tackling, combo attacks with fellow Warriors, and grab attacks to drag and throw enemies. There are range attacks too, favoring bricks, pipes, and bottles (which can be broken to make knives). Other pick-up weapons include planks with nails, garbage bags, and televisions. The rage mode—a now-standard fixture in brawlers—will clear an area in a most dramatic and thorough fashion. The game's open environments allow for side quests to steal cars, mug pedestrians, and loot stores to make money.

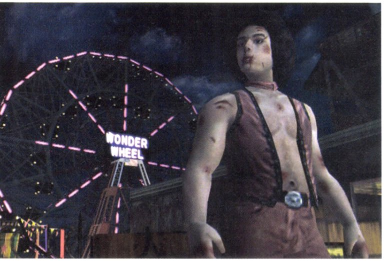
IT'S A NO-HOLDS-BARRED BASH-EM-UP.

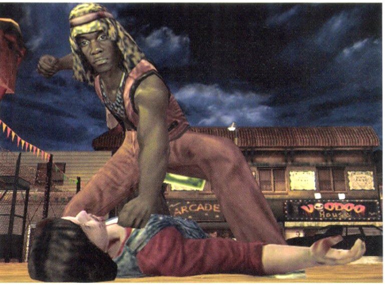
We can think of a lot of classic films that could be made into games (*Lawrence of Arabia*, anyone?), but we don't know if they'd make *good* games. With *The Warriors* as a starting point, Rockstar may find it's struck licensing *and* gaming gold. «

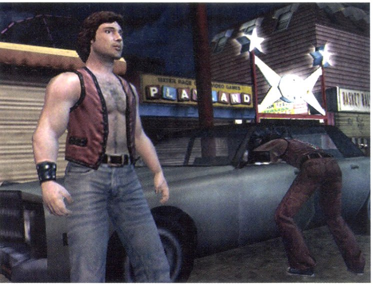


Pub Rockstar Games **Dev** Rockstar Toronto **Release** Fall




WONDER WHEEL


ARCADE
VOODOO House



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VIDEO GAME
EVERYONE E Comic Mischief Mild Lyrics

UBI FIGHTS THE GOOD FIGHT

Ubisoft continues its fight against Electronic Arts, despite the fact that EA now owns 20 percent of the French company. Yves Guillemot (pictured above), president and CEO of Ubisoft, urged stockholders to hold on to their shares and promised that the company would continue to grow significantly within the next two years. Ubisoft's strategy to combat the EA takeover is to build up more in-house talent, release more marquee games (such as November's *King Kong*), and continue support for the Tom Clancy label.

TAKING A HIT

Take-Two Interactive announced that it lost $8.2 million in revenue during the second quarter of 2005. While losing money is never great news, at least the company made 45 percent more than it did the previous year during the same time period. *Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition* and *Major League Baseball 2K5* have both been strong sellers for the company. Right now, one of Take-Two's primary goals is to build a strong sports brand, as sales of sports games can help the company make up for lost revenue—something Electronic Arts has been doing for years with its sports franchises—in between the release of new *GTA* games.

FACTORING IN THE PS3

Factor 5 revealed at this year's E3 that it plans to support the PlayStation 3, even though the company has been one of the staunchest supporters of Nintendo and its hardware. Factor 5 is responsible for developing the *Star Wars* games for Nintendo's GameCube, and while the games may not be all that great in terms of gameplay, their technical achievements are quite impressive. We can't wait to see what the developer can do with the PlayStation 3 hardware.

ZOE FLOWER

FIFTEEN MINUTES OF GAME

ZOE FLOWER is not a model, actress, or even a real journalist. She does like to talk to herself and take her own picture in the mirror, though. She is currently working on the first ever biopic created solely on the EyeToy. Of course, it's all about her.

It's no secret that I've always poked fun at the mainstream press for its often laughable attempts to cover the videogame industry. Backed by my own hard-fought experience within the elite enthusiast press, I have mocked the attempts to bring "credibility" to videogames via awkward celebrity interviews or stereotypical hipster hosts. You know the ones—the sexy Playmate of the Year sporting a tight T-shirt with an obscure Japanese logo on it or a twenty-something dude with an energy drink and gravity-defying bed-head hair.

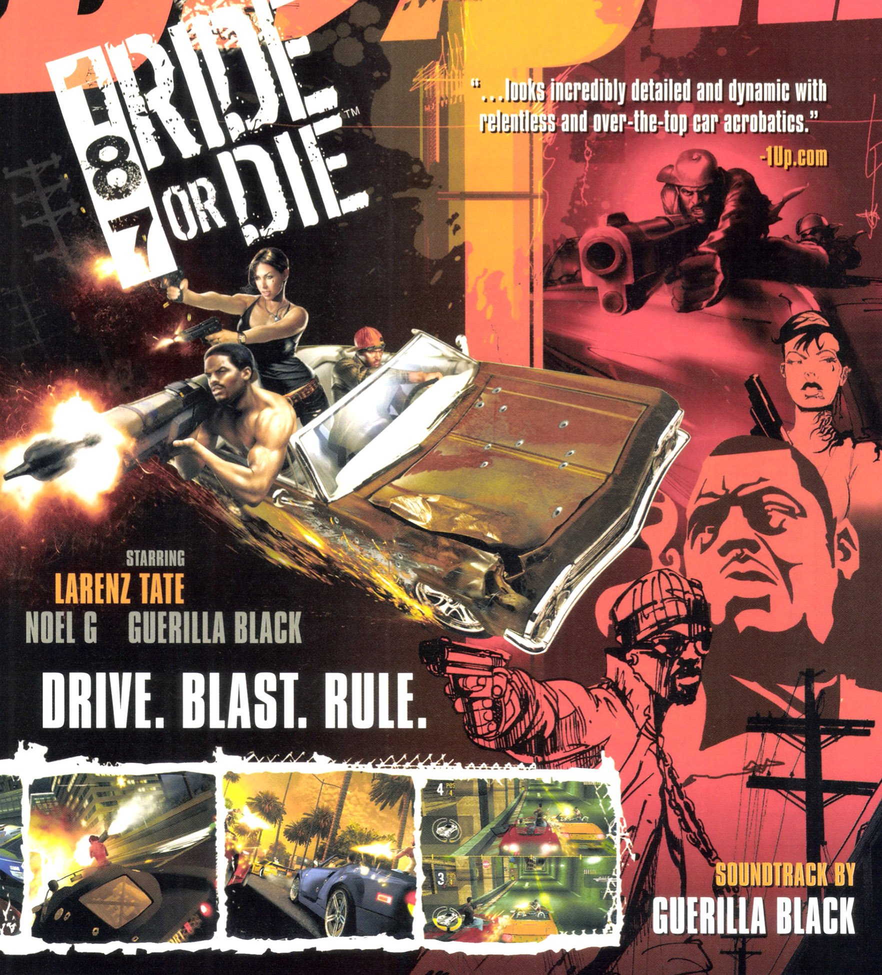
And so, last week, teetering in impossibly high heels on a set in New York City (thanks to Spike TV's offer to let me host its E3 special), I found myself wide-eyed, staring down the shaft of a giant crane camera teleprompter and adjusting my own *otaku*-inspired tee. Yes, I too was wondering just how on earth a random gaming enthusiast ended up in front of a camera usually reserved for models and actors!

First of all, when I'm out there ranting about how sucky I think videogame TV is, it seems a bit surreal that any network would want to hire me in the first place. More important, I've always been superpicky about choosing work that offers a little "street cred" or, at a minimum, lets me harass game developers. But it was while fighting through the media-frenzied crowds of this year's E3 that I realized the "mainstream" coverage of our industry just isn't going away—no matter how much I rant about it or how contrived and silly it may seem to us! Every media outlet and every website I've ever heard of (and then some) had a camera crew at E3, as well as the token hyperactive hosts ready to get the basic goods on what's hot, what's new, and which booth babes have the most cleavage. It's likely many of them have never touched a controller and think *Grand Theft Auto* is an accusation or that the Cell processor is a fancy juice blender for your kitchen (right, Mom?).

IT SEEMS A BIT SURREAL THAT ANY NETWORK WOULD WANT TO HIRE ME.

That's when I started to think that maybe I shouldn't be so judgmental. Perhaps the average viewer can enjoy videogame content without any elitist knowledge of *Final Fantasy* spells or *SOCOM* server rankings—without causing any harm to those of us with a passion for materia and chocobos.

And thus, with my newfound broad-mindedness, I found myself giving up pod racing through *Lego Star Wars* and boarding a plane toward my own 15 minutes of fame (infamy?). As the E3 show airs tomorrow, I will suffer bouts of panic. I have no idea if the show I just hosted will 1) get watched or 2) get panned. I will find a hiding spot under my couch for fear that I've made a complete ass out of myself—something I'm only comfortable doing via magazine columns. And then I realized, with the help of Yoda, it matters not! It's just TV! Even when the channel changes, we'll still be here playing games long after my 15 minutes are over. «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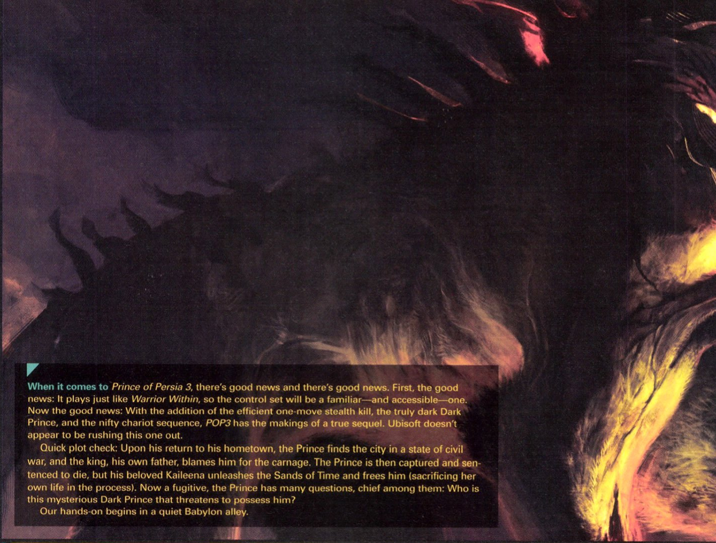
PRINCE OF PERSIA 3

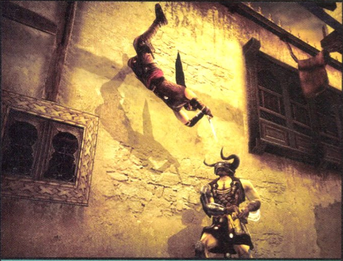
SAME AS WARRIOR WITHIN, BUT DIFFERENT



When it comes to *Prince of Persia 3*, there's good news and there's good news. First, the good news: It plays just like *Warrior Within*, so the control set will be a familiar—and accessible—one. Now the good news: With the addition of the efficient one-move stealth kill, the truly dark Dark Prince, and the nifty chariot sequence, *POP3* has the makings of a true sequel. Ubisoft doesn't appear to be rushing this one out.

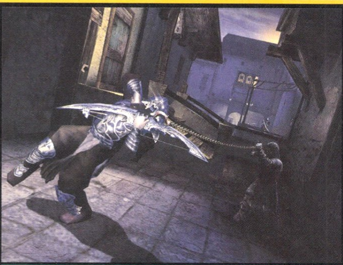
Quick plot check: Upon his return to his hometown, the Prince finds the city in a state of civil war, and the king, his own father, blames him for the carnage. The Prince is then captured and sentenced to die, but his beloved Kaileena unleashes the Sands of Time and frees him (sacrificing her own life in the process). Now a fugitive, the Prince has many questions, chief among them: Who is this mysterious Dark Prince that threatens to possess him?

Our hands-on begins in a quiet Babylon alley.



THE ONE-MOVE STEALTH KILL

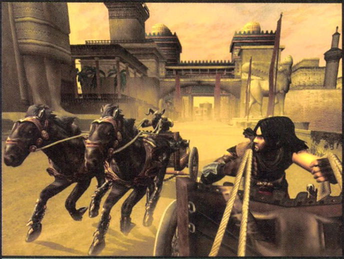
We first take out two guards and pick up a fallen scimitar. We then wall-run to a square patch in the wall and stab the scimitar into it, which allows for another short wall-run and a leap to the parapet ahead. Next, we carefully sneak up to the clueless guard, get in proper range, and toss the sword for a lovely head-lob. After a few more leaps and some pole-spins, we find our Prince situated between two buildings. We slide him down until he is just above two more guards. In one careful button combo, we have the Prince jump on top of the first guard and cut his throat, then twirl around to the second guard, whose neck the Prince locks with his legs. Both guards go down in a spectacular shower of red.



THE DARK PRINCE

You may have heard a little about the Prince's evil doppelganger, the Dark Prince. Visually, he's an exact opposite: white hair, gray skin, and empty eyes. He also packs a chain as his primary weapon, which is deadly effective at short range. While he jumps and moves the same as the regular Prince, the Dark Prince's combos and the aforementioned weaponry add an intriguing dimension to the Prince as we know him. The Prince's dark side has potential.

Bonus: In the Dark Prince sequence, we got a glimpse of the vast and open cityscape that is Babylon. We could see rooftops seemingly for miles, and the best part is it's all playable game space.



THE CHARIOT

In a gameplay addition that may raise a few eyebrows, the Prince pulls a Ben Hur by taking the reigns of a chariot in order to get to another section of Babylon. Along the way, he suffers attacks from enemy chariots, which he can either fight hand-to-hand or force to crash. He's also the target of various ranged weapons. It's an intense sequence, as the Prince must negotiate his chariot through streets, past obstacles, and across broken bridges—you'll be hurling yourself desperately across chasms (much like Sandra Bullock did with a bus in *Speed*). While it's exciting, let's hope Ubisoft doesn't decide to do a *Prince of Persia* racing game. «

Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft Montreal **Release** Holiday 2005

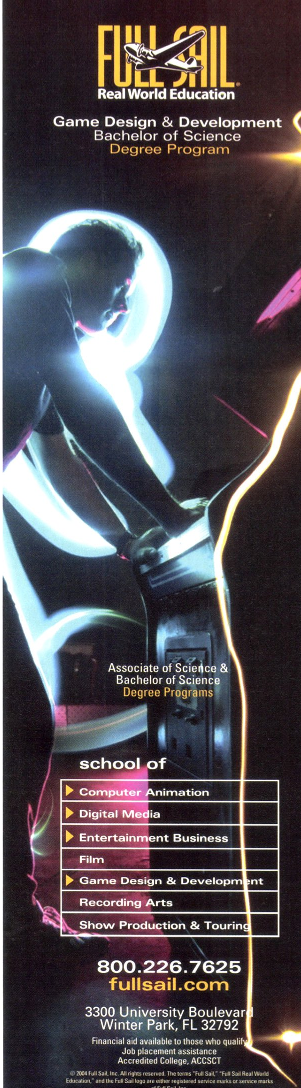
PlayStation

OPM DISC BONUS:
PLAY SANDS OF TIME AND WARRIOR WITHIN

If you're unfamiliar with the *Prince of Persia* series, we've included playable demos of the first two PS2 games on this month's disc for you to test-drive. Here's what we thought of the two games:

Our five-out-of-five rating for *Sands of Time*, as well as our Game of the Year for 2003 award, bore testimony to the game's fun and innovative play and deft character and level design. Joe called it a masterpiece.

Warrior Within appeared a mere year later, but the differences were pronounced: While the puzzles and basic gameplay remained largely the same, combat was beefed up considerably. Also, the introduction of blood and an edgier Prince forced an M rating. A clumsy story, bad heavy-metal music, and monotonous boss battles brought this sequel down a notch. We gave it four out of five.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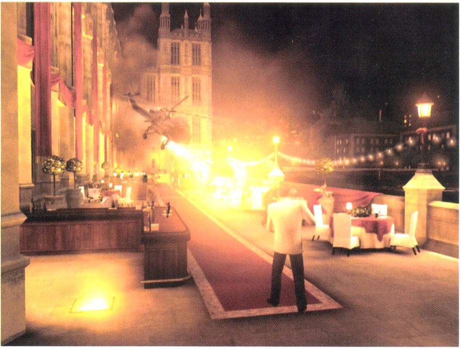

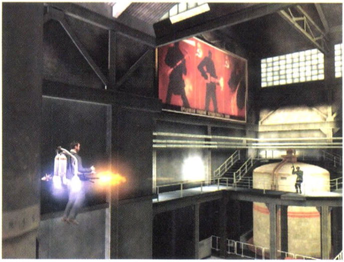

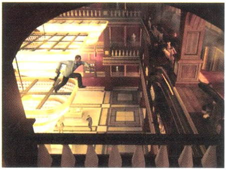

THE VILLAINS
We assume all these classic *FRWL* movie baddies will be in the game. Top left to right: Red Grant, Rosa Klebb and Kronsteen. Bottom left to right: Morzeny and Ernst Blofeld.

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

THEY HAD US AT SEAN CONNERY

"Bond...James Bond." Sean Connery, inarguably the greatest Bond ever, didn't actually say his signature line in the classic film *From Russia With Love*, but it sets the proper tone here. After all, it was the debonair-but-tough Connery who, through six Bond films (*Never Say Never Again* doesn't count, as it's actually a remake of *Thunderball* and was not officially endorsed by the Broccoli family), forever defined the mythic agent of Her Majesty's Secret Service. True, Pierce Brosnan and Roger Moore made their own convincing marks, but hey, Connery was just a tough act to follow.

Credit Electronic Arts for recognizing this. Ever seeking new ways to keep its Bond franchise fresh, EA has set the way-back machine to 1963 and will bring *FRWL* and Connery back in game form. For those unfamiliar with the film (rent the special-edition DVD), Bond is sent on a mission to Istanbul to recover a Soviet encryption device called the Lektor. He soon discovers it's a S.P.E.C.T.R.E. (as in Special Executive for Counterintelligence, Terrorism, Revenge, and Extortion) trap, set to allow that most evil of organizations to wreak its revenge against Bond for killing Dr. No. Bad guys include Red Grant, Kronsteen, Rosa Klebb, and Ernst Blofeld, and, of course, there are gadgets and action aplenty.

EA's *FRWL* expands the film (the company is calling it a director's cut) into a third-person action-adventure game that can most conveniently be described as a follow-up to 2003's excellent *Everything or Nothing*. You'll guide Bond—voiced by none other than Sean Connery himself—through authentic 1960s environments where car, boat, and other vehicle chases abound. You'll have access to new weapons and gadgets in more than 12 action and stealth missions. The game does take a few liberties with the Bond films' continuity, the most notable being the ability to use a jetpack, a gadget that didn't appear until 1965's *Thunderball*. EA is also injecting some RPG elements into the mix with the inclusion of an upgrading system for Bond's weapons, gadgets, and suits (dinner jackets, tuxes, and so on). Multiplayer mode is splitscreen deathmatch for up to four players (with Multitap) and allows access to all the characters in the game.

From Russia With Love the game will also include original dialogue from the film. We're pretty sure we'll get chills when Connery deadpans after shooting down a S.P.E.C.T.R.E. helicopter: "I'd shay one of their aircraft is misshing." And we're hoping EA throws in our favorite riff, coincidentally heard often around the *OPM* offices:

Rosa Klebb: I have chosen you for a very special assignment, top secret. If you complete it successfully, you will be promoted.
Tatiana: Suppose I decline to accept it...?
Rosa Klebb: Then you will not leave this room alive.
Tatiana: I shall give it due consideration, then. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA Redwood Shores **Release** Fall

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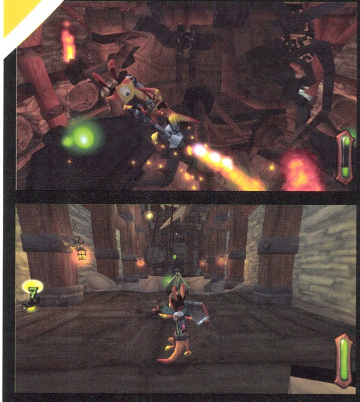
PSP: GAMES FOR THE REST OF US

The PSP launch was awesome if you were really into racing and sports games. If you weren't...well, there was always *Lumines*. Fortunately, the next few months will give gamers the chance to diversify their game collections. Here we present some platforming, shooting, and puzzle games, as well as a classic tennis game that doesn't require an enjoyment of athletics to love.



DAXTER

A SIDEKICK GETS HIS OWN GAME

The "sidekick curse" is a potent one. Just ask Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Jason Alexander, and Michael Richards, *Seinfeld*'s Elaine, George, and Kramer, respectively. After that show ended in 1999, the three sidekicks famously tried to launch their own sitcoms but failed miserably. They're still trying.

The moral of the *Seinfeld* story shouldn't be lost on Ready at Dawn Studios as it prepares its *Daxter* game for the PSP. Can Jak's little orange friend carry a game on his own?

We won't be able to answer that question until early next year. In the meantime, we see only potential. On the surface, *Daxter* is a standard-issue action-platformer. You'll guide Daxter through a to-be-determined number of levels in a story that settles the burning question of how Daxter freed Jak at the beginning of *Jak II*. In terms of character design, *Daxter* is decent: Aside from being able to crawl on all fours, squeeze through small holes, and commandeer various (unspecified) vehicles, Daxter has a special animal mode (he is, after all, an ottsel) that lets him climb walls and execute stealth attacks. Weapons include a swatter and a bug-spray gun.

Given the story line, we're certain Jak will make a cameo in *Daxter*, but its connection to the console game goes much further than this. Via USB, you'll be able to use your PSP to unlock drivers, vehicles, and graphics in *Jak X: Combat Racing* on the PS2; conversely, you'll be able to open secret features in *Daxter* through *Jak X*. Bonus levels will have you journey with Daxter into his dreams, in which he fantasizes about becoming the hero his oversized ego always knew he'd become.

Come spring 2006, we'll see if Daxter can beat the sidekick curse. Now that would be his dream come true. «

THE VOICE

Daxter is voiced by Max Casella. Though Casella has had small parts in *Analyze This*, *Sgt. Bilko*, and *Ed Wood*, he is probably best known for his role in *Doogie Howser, M.D.* as Doogie's best friend, Vinnie Delpino. He also played Timon (the loudmouthed meerkat) in the Broadway adaptation of *The Lion King*.

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Ready at Dawn Studios **Release** Spring 2006

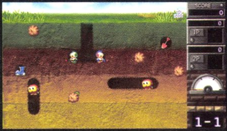
NAMCO MUSEUM BATTLE COLLECTION

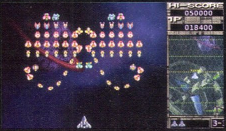
FOR THE LESS THAN HARDCORE

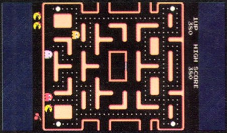
Ask Joe Citizen to name a videogame, and 90 percent of the time, the first response you'll hear is "*Pac-Man.*" Well, finally there's a PSP game that all of those average people on the street can relate to. *Namco Museum Battle Collection* brings to the small screen all of Namco's favorite titles; you'll be able to play these arcade classics in their original pixelated forms or as updated 3D versions. In addition to *Pac-Man* (both the original and *Ms.* versions), the collection will include *Dig Dug, Galaga, Rally-X,* and more than a dozen others.

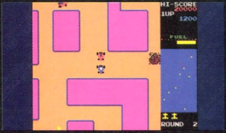
The cool part about the collection coming to PSP is the multiplayer opportunities that become available. You'll be able to play wirelessly with up to four players in either co-op or versus modes. *Battle Collection* also includes what is rapidly becoming one of our favorite uses for the PSP's built-in Wi-Fi capability: the ability to beam demos to friends who don't have the game. Hardcore gamers may scoff and deem this title a lightweight, but it's always important to remember your roots. Plus, this might just be the ticket to convince a reluctant significant other that PSP ownership is a good thing. «

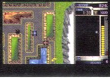
Pub. Namco **Dev.** Namco **Release** Summer











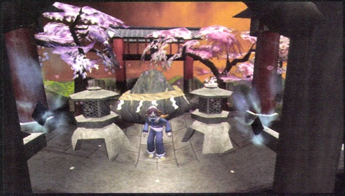
FRANTIX

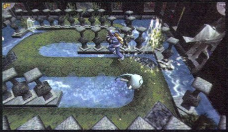
BOX IT UP

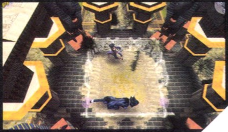
Puzzle games are perfect for portable systems in so many ways. You can play them for two minutes or two hours, it doesn't take long to remember what was going on if you come back to a game after a break, and they're easily accessible for gamers of all skill levels and ages. Sony Online will bring its own entry into this genre with the upcoming *Frantix.*

Frantix is a 3D puzzler that has you pushing boxes past obstacles to reach a specified end point within a certain time limit. Sometimes finding the solution is simply a matter of avoiding static hazards; one of the simpler introductory puzzles has you figuring out how to navigate the box over a stream. As the game progresses, however, so does the difficulty level—at higher levels, you can find yourself actively avoiding enemies who are trying to kill you. Along the way, you'll find gems that you can use to power up. *Frantix* has 150 challenges set in six different worlds, and each world will provide its own set of environmental challenges. «

Pub. Sony Online Entertainment **Dev.** Killer Game **Release** Fall 2005







SOCOM:
U.S. NAVY SEALS FIRETEAM BRAVO

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE HOOKUP

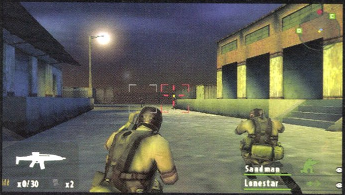
You no doubt saw last month's exclusive first hands-on with this fantastic-looking PSP adaptation of *SOCOM*, but in case you didn't, here's a quick recap: 14 missions, lock-on targeting, the same areas of operation as *SOCOM 3* (plus the PSP-exclusive Chile), and a very, very true-to-form *SOCOM* feel, in spite of necessary alterations to the control scheme.

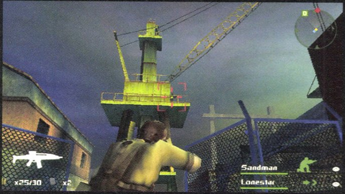
Now Sony has revealed that the game will interface with your PS2. Through a system called "crosstalk," completing objectives in one game will affect the other. The way Sony presents the idea, it sounds as though this will be more than unlocking new weapons, characters, or abilities (à la *Daxter*), but more specific details are still forthcoming. All we know for sure at this point is that when you complete a crosstalk objective, you'll be prompted to sync your PSP with your PS2 via a USB cable; presumably, the game saves will be updated at this point.

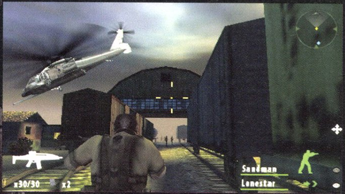
Sony has also revealed that the game will indeed feature both ad-hoc and infrastructure-based (that is, both in-person and online) multiplayer—including support for clans. No word yet on the number of players these modes will support, however; our guess is that Zipper is still running tests to determine how many players the hardware can handle.

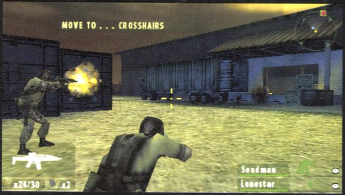
Having had a chance to get even more hands-on time with the game at E3, we continue to be impressed by how well Zipper has managed to transfer the *SOCOM* feel to the portable format. There's definitely a learning curve for the controls, but the lock-on targeting is surprisingly easy to adjust to. Now we just can't wait to get some multiplayer time. «

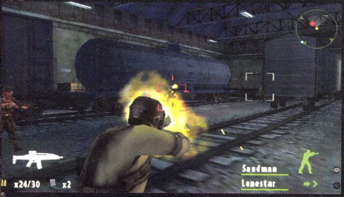
Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Zipper Interactive **Release** Fall











VIRTUA TENNIS: WORLD TOUR

THE NEW ADDICTION

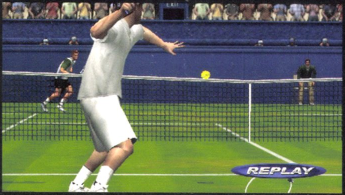
If you owned a Dreamcast, chances are you owned *Virtua Tennis*. Its surprising accessibility, perfect feel, and hellaciously addictive collection of minigames made it a cult classic. Now Sega is bringing this classic to the PSP, and after some extensive hands-on time at E3, we're frankly astonished by how well it plays.

The key to *Virtua Tennis* has always been its simple controls: The intuitive shot system and generous timing are perfect examples of pick-up-and-play design, making the game extremely easy to get into. And then the whimsical minigames (tennis bowling, for example) and unlockable features make it very difficult to get back out.

World Tour introduces a larger roster of real-life tennis pros (14 in all) and a create-a-player option to give you that personal connection to your character, who you'll take through the world tour mode, unlocking new accessories, raising stats, and increasing rank—think *Tiger Woods*, only tennis, with a similar cash-based upgrade system. As if that weren't enough to suck players in, the game will also support four players via ad-hoc wireless play, allowing you to get a full doubles game together with all human players.

Most importantly, the game just feels right. While the PSP's pseudo-analog nub tends to feel a bit janky with games translated from true analog control, it seems to be perfectly suited to tennis. We won't be a bit surprised if this turns into the next can't-put-it-down PSP title. «

Pub. Sega **Dev.** Sega **Release** Fall 2005



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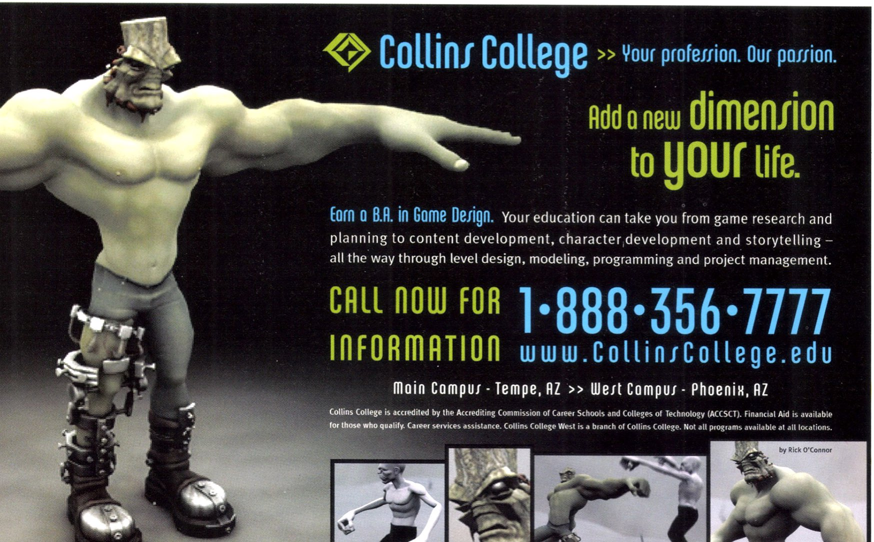
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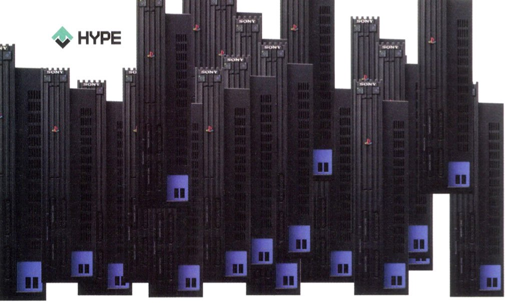
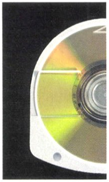
by Rick O'Connor



...AND COUNTING

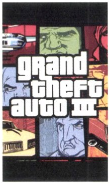
The PlayStation 2 has reached over 90 million units in sales worldwide, according to Sony Computer Entertainment. More than 36 million units have been sold in North America, while 32 million and 21 million units have been sold in Europe and Asia, respectively. Sales of the PlayStation 2 are on track to outpace those of the original PlayStation. It makes you kind of wonder why everyone's jumping into the next generation when sales of the current consoles are still going strong.

MORE VIDEO TO GO



The list of studios supporting the PSP's UMD format continues to grow. Paramount Home Entertainment plans to release a variety of movies and TV shows on UMD, with *Team America: World Police*, *Coach Carter*, *Sahara*, *The SpongeBob SquarePants Movie*, *Chappelle's Show: Volume 1*, and *South Park: Volume 1* all due out in August. Other August releases include *The Rock*, *Shaolin Soccer*, *Sin City*, and *Coyote Ugly* from Disney's movie studios.

AGAIN WITH THE VIOLENCE



Officials in Japan's Kanagawa prefecture have given *Grand Theft Auto III* the severest content rating possible under Japan's content rating scheme and have ordered that the game be displayed separately from others. Retailers in the region are not allowed to sell the game to minors, and any retailer caught doing so will face a stiff fine of 300,000 yen (approximately $2,700). The move is surprising considering the game was released almost two years ago.

THE OUTSIDER

SWITCHING SIDES

ROBIN WILSON is lead singer for the Gin Blossoms and and enjoys physics and cooking shows. Find him on 1UP at theoutsider.1UP.com.

Sony has a big problem on its hands: my wife. Because I am seriously thinking about buying an Xbox 360, and if I do, it's going to be damn near impossible for me to convince my wife to allow me to buy a PlayStation 3 as well. Heck, if she knew what I already spend on games and related crap, her head would explode.

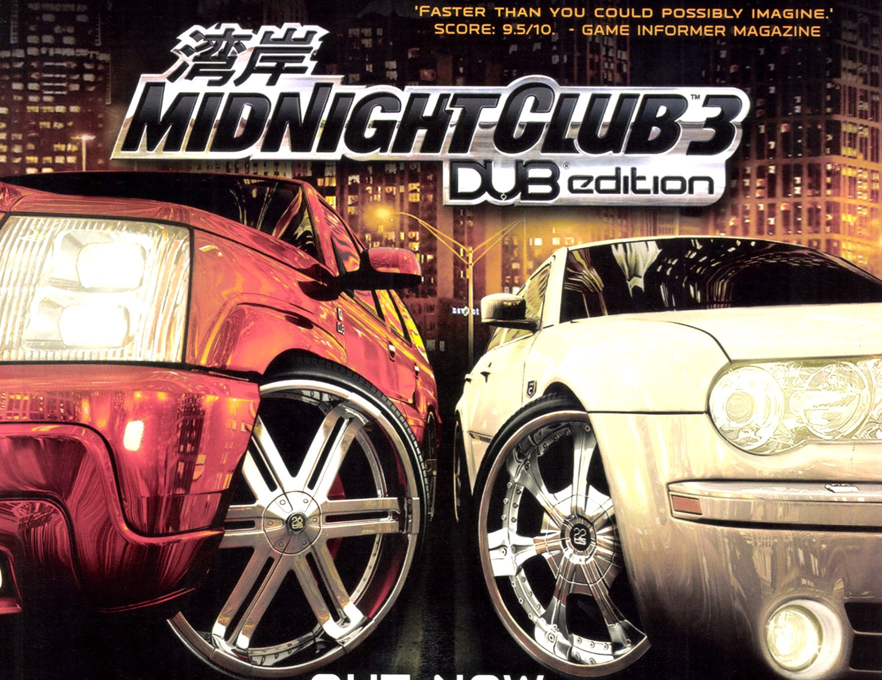
I haven't bothered to buy an Xbox because I wasn't going to fight with my wife just to play *Halo*, and I've been having a fine time with my PlayStation 2. It's been hard to resist buying an Xbox, but in the end I just bought a second PS2 (which is now broken). But when I first saw photos of the Xbox 360 and its controller, I immediately thought in these crude but exact words: "Wow. That thing is cool. That is a game machine. I want one of those." On the other hand, when I first saw photos of the PS3 and its crazy new controller, the *only* word that came to mind was "Meh." Just looking at pictures of the PS3's newfangled controller prototype gave me carpal tunnel syndrome.

Millions of gamers like me may be forced to make a difficult choice: Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3? In making this choice we have to remind ourselves that we don't owe anything to Sony or Microsoft, certainly not our exclusive loyalty. Personally, I'm already a great customer to both, especially Sony. I looked around my house, and without even trying very hard, I found the Sony logo on at least 40 different pieces of electronics and accessories. I own multiple Sony televisions, Hi-Fis, Walkmen, Discmen, video cameras, digital cameras, battery chargers, Memory Sticks—and let us not forget to mention again the two PlayStation 2s (one of which is broken) and a PS1 (also broken). My old Game Boy, Sega Genesis, and Nintendo 64 still work just fine, by the way.

Let's face it: Sony did not lead this generation with the dependability of its hardware. The PS2 is inferior to the Xbox in power, function, and value, but that hasn't stopped Sony from kicking Microsoft's ass. We all know it's not about the specs. Sony won this round of the console wars by overwhelming us with great software. That being true, we'll still leave this generation with only a handful of must-keep titles and with the promise of the PS2 left unfulfilled. The hard drive is a dud, the EyeToy is a novelty, and Sony's online support has been minimal at best. Think about it: It's 2005 and *Gran Turismo* still isn't online. Talk about your broken promises.

So I don't owe anything to Sony, and neither do you. On the contrary: Sony owes us. It owes us a PS3 that none of us can live without and exclusive titles so good that I'm willing to fight with my wife just to play them. «

I DON'T OWE ANYTHING TO SONY, AND NEITHER DO YOU.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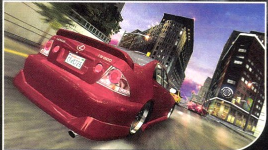

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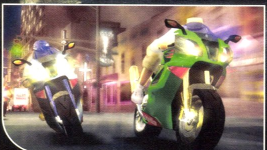

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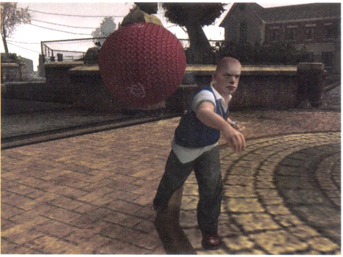
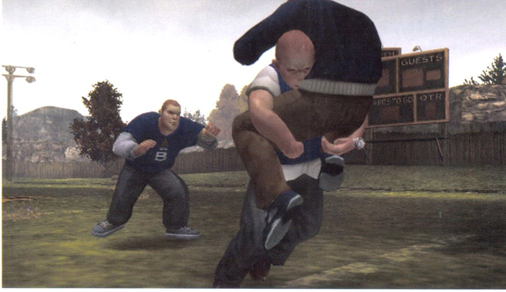
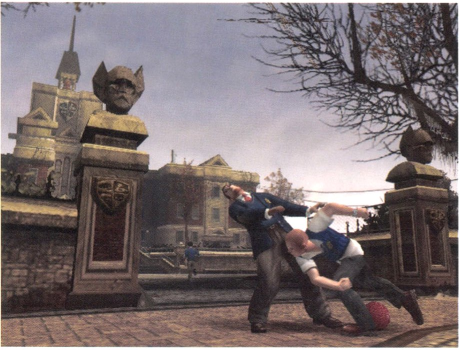
BULLWORTH ACADEMY
CANIS CANEM EDIT

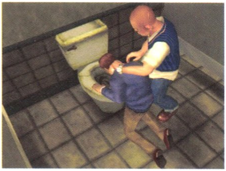
BULLY

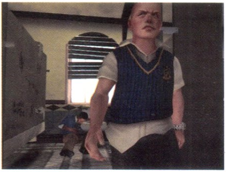
IT'S A HARD-KNOCK LIFE











GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS

While there are girls in the game, at present Rockstar is remaining mum on what sort of interaction Jimmy will be able to have with them. Thanks to our incredible ability to sniff out the subtle shades of meaning behind the phrase "no comment," we're pretty certain this means you can plan on at least a mission or two in the game revolving around Jimmy's social life.

Raul Jackson. Tricia DeBoer. Mark Green. John Daly. These names might not mean anything to you, but say them within earshot of the *OPM* editors, and you might find us cowering in a bathroom stall. To us, these names are the ultimate embodiment of that good ol' archetype, the school bully.

We're not sure if the guys at Rockstar were bullies or bullied, but they've definitely tapped into that part of their lives for their upcoming game, aptly named *Bully*. The title seems to deal with the game's overall mindset rather than the automatic determination of your character. While you can beat up anyone who crosses your path, there are also other people in the game with bullying natures whom you can beat up, presumably even to help out the occasional underdog.

You play as angelic Jimmy Hawkins, who has been kicked out of every school he has ever attended. Now at the ripe old age of 15, he's been sent to the last place that will take him: Bullworth Academy. Bullworth is ostensibly a reform school, but it has elements of a posh boarding school as well—the rich kids have their own special dorm, which you'll have to break in to for the various missions.

The game's structure will be familiar to anyone who has played the *Grand Theft Auto* games. There are a series of story missions to complete (the whole plot takes place over the course of a school year), but if you get tired of that, you can also just run around and interact with the large environment. The mission we saw takes place about 20 percent of the way into the game. Jimmy is called up by one of the school's science teachers, who happens to be an avid tender of Venus'-flytraps. However, he does not have the distinction of owning the school's largest Venus'-flytrap—that honor belongs to a student, Derby Harrington. The professor, not being able to stand the thought of anyone possessing a superior specimen, charges Jimmy with destroying Derby's Venus'-flytrap.

Since Derby lives in a private dorm, Jimmy will need to get a hold of the password before he can gain access. A whole range of bullying tactics will be at your disposal to help you get things from unwilling participants. In this case, Jimmy chooses a resident of Derby's dorm who's somewhat of a weakling and then proceeds to give him swirlies until the student finally relents and tells Jimmy the password ("Connecticut").

Once Jimmy enters the dorm, he'll need to fight his way through the residents to get to the flytrap, which is on the second floor. Hand-to-hand combat is a big part of the game (one of your moves includes spitting), but you'll also be able to pick up and use objects and weapons you find. In five minutes of fighting, we watched Jimmy throw plates, swing paddles, wield slingshots, and set off cherry bombs.

THROW PLATES, SWING PADDLES, AND SET OFF CHERRY BOMBS.

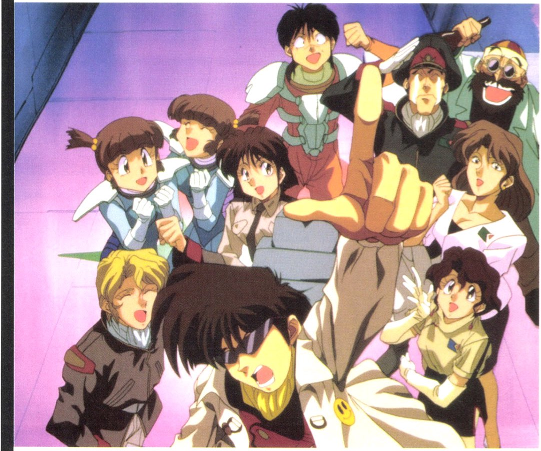
In addition to the missions, Jimmy has a regular class schedule. Attendance is voluntary, but if you skip class, you'll encounter more harassment from teachers and prefects. If you do choose to go, you'll compete in quick minigames. For example, in the PE class we saw, the students were playing dodgeball; gamers will spend a minute or so trying to catch balls and dodge crazy throws.

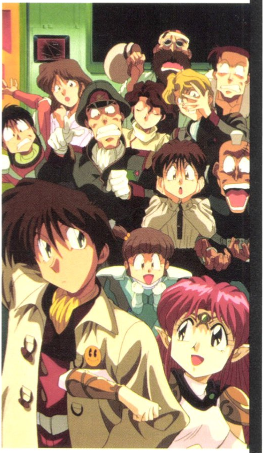
Will *Bully* be anything more than *GTA* in a school uniform? We don't know, but we'll keep you abreast of all the updates as the fall release date gets closer. «

Pub. Rockstar Dev. Rockstar Vancouver Release October

ANIMANIA

THE OLD SCHOOL, THE NEW SCHOOL, AND WHATEVER FITS IN BETWEEN





O CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN

A few years ago, Right Stuf wasn't sure anyone would buy *Irresponsible Captain Tylor* on DVD. Now, it's been successful enough to get a well-deserved double-dip in the form of an "ultra collector's box" due out this summer. For only $99.99, the limited-edition box will include all 26 episode of the *Tylor* TV series, plus extras that dwarf almost any other anime release to date.

Besides the series, the box will include the series' soundtrack, *Sentehisshou*; a 32-page novella by series creator Hitoshi Yoshioka; a 64-page booklet of artwork and interviews; and two full DVDs of interviews with the Japanese creators and other extras. The lot will be packaged in a very stylish foldout box, a cut or two above the previously released oversize clamshells.

Tylor is one of the classics of early '90s anime, a science-fiction comedy chronicling a 20-year-old layabout's meteoric career in the United Planets Space Force. He goes from street dweller to pension clerk to destroyer captain to fleet admiral, and possibly savior of the galaxy as well, although the answer to the eternal Tylor question—man, myth, messiah, or moron?—remains open for debate. Whichever it might be, the story of Justy Ueki Tylor's rise to the top is easily one of the finest pieces of entertainment available on the animation market today. The box will be produced in limited quantities, so preorders may be necessary in advance of the July 5 release.

GAMES, ANIME, PORN, REPEAT

Another brilliant comedy of a more down-to-earth sort hits July 26, when Media Blasters releases the first volume of *Genshiken*. Short for "Gendai Shikaku Bunka Kenkyuukai" (Society for the Study of Modern Visual Culture), the 12-episode series follows a band of college-age geeks in their quest for more cartoons, more comics, more videogames, more doujinshi fan-porn, and ever more rarefied heights of geekdom. Meanwhile, determined non-nerd Saki Kasukabe tries to wrench her oblivious boyfriend Makoto Kohsaka from the iron grip of fandom.

Unlike Gainax's *Otaku no Video*, *Genshiken*'s not a parody—it's true enough to life that it may as well be a documentary, and it has a keen sympathy for its maniacal subjects, even when it's poking fun at the depths of their obsession. The message, if you have to find one in the middle of all the gags, is that we're all obsessed with something.

The *Genshiken* TV series will come out on three DVDs, each with four episodes of the show itself and an extra episode of *Kujibiki Unbalance,* a show-within-the-show that the *Genshiken* crew is madly in love with. Meanwhile, Del Rey's manga imprint already has the first volume of the excellent *Genshiken* comic series on the market, with more volumes to follow quarterly starting in late summer.

DAYS AND DATES

Bandai is going box-set crazy with its back catalog on July 12, releasing supercheap sets of *Gundam 0080* ($29.98), *Gundam 0083* ($49.98), *08th MS Team* ($49.98), *Infinite Ryvius* ($59.98), and the *Silent Mobius* TV series (a mere $29.98 for 26 episodes). That's a crowded day for first-run releases, too, including Makoto Shinkai's *The Place Promised in Our Early Days* (the second feature from the creator of *Voices of a Distant Star*). A week later, watch out for ADV's first volume of the new-school *Area 88* TV series, which reprises the classic '80s drama about mercenary fighter pilots. « *Dave Smith*

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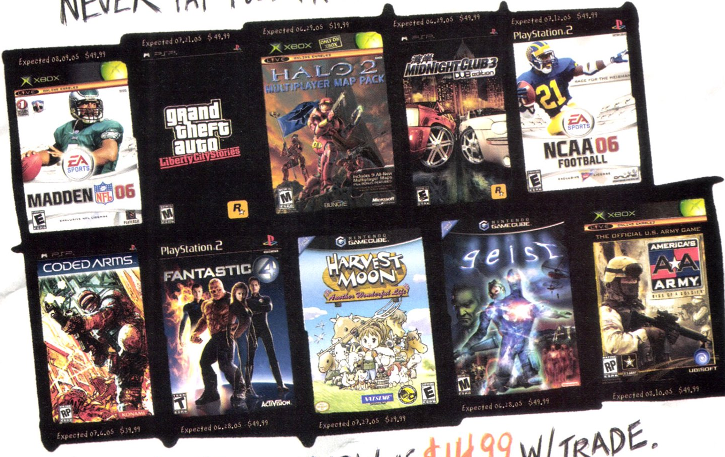
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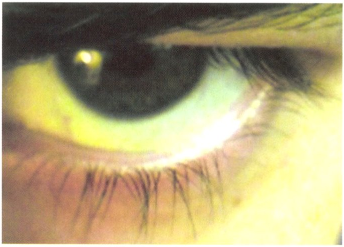
XXX
SONY
PSP

PLAYSTATION POR(N)ABLE?

Two Japan-based pornography distributors are going to release eight films on the UMD format this summer in Japan. Sony has stated several times in the past that it has no plans to regulate content that appears on the UMD format, which may ultimately work in its favor. Sales of PSP games have dropped drastically in Japan due to lack of any worthwhile releases, and few PSP games have even managed to maintain spots in the sales charts. Meanwhile, the Nintendo DS continues to have a strong showing with several games in top positions and brisk hardware sales.



READING IS FUNDAMENTAL

While Sony is having problems supplying a consistent flow of good games to its handheld, the company is looking for other opportunities to get people to use their PSPs more often. The company recently filed a number of patents under the trademarks PSP Comics, PSP Magazine, and PSP Books, suggesting it has plans to bring a variety of reading material to the handheld. The only question we have is, How many people would even actually consider doing any sort of reading that requires a significant amount of attention on their PSP?

JAPANTOWN

DOES ANYONE REMEMBER THE PLAYSTATION PORTABLE?

ANDREW VESTAL
teaches English in the land of our friends to the East, but he still doesn't understand some of their game choices.

Shiny, black, about yea big, answers to the name "PSP." It launched in Japan in December and in the United States in March to strong critical acclaim; SCE President Ken Kutaragi loudly declared that it would "elevate portable gaming out of the handheld ghetto."

Yes, that PSP. What happened? A few months ago, the system seemed invincible. It was sexy, compact, and cool, while the Nintendo DS was large and clunky, a Frankenstein's monster of unproven gaming technologies. The PSP could play and display state-of-the-art games, movies, music, photos, and manga.... The PSP was from the future. Its success seemed predetermined.

Yet at E3 2005, Sony didn't even mention the PSP during its keynote presentation, focusing instead on the far-off PlayStation 3. On the show floor itself, the PSP was relegated to a corner of Sony's booth, with only about a dozen games on display. Sure, some big franchises such as *SOCOM* and *Grand Theft Auto* could give the system a much-needed boost. Still, to call Sony's E3 showing an "afterthought" would be charitable; casual observers would be forgiven for forgetting the system even exists.

In Japan, a strong launch lineup has given way to endless "sound novels," graphical adventures, and pachinko/slot machine games. In July, there's an RPG, *Tenchi no Mon.* But then what? Right now, the future of the PSP is a big, silent question mark. In last month's column, I observed that Sony is primarily a hardware company, content to create a stellar platform and let the games fall where they may. Except in this case, software developers—and Sony itself—seem to have become distracted by the shinier potential of the "real" next-gen consoles.

it one of this generation's most successful new IP launches. Sitting atop the Japanese sales charts in early June is *Nou o Kitaeru Otona no DS Training* (in English: "Train Your Brain: DS Training for Adults"), a budget-priced collection of puzzles, brainteasers, and drills designed to increase your mental agility. And the big draw for summer 2005? A Japanese-English dictionary. It may sound ridiculous, but the ability to draw unknown characters with a stylus gives it an advantage over traditional electronic dictionaries. These pieces of software aren't particularly innovative or glamorous, but they all take advantage of the DS hardware in unique, platform-specific ways.

> THE FUTURE OF THE PSP IS A BIG, SILENT QUESTION MARK.

In Japan, though the two systems launched only a week apart, the Nintendo DS now leads the PSP by 1 million units—2.4 million to 1.4 million. People are choosing Nintendo's hardware because of its constant stream of software, and low-budget "nongame" software has been particularly successful. Toshio Iwai, a Japanese media artist, created *Electroplankton*, an abstract, goalless work of sound and vision. *Nintendogs*, a virtual pet game, lets you call, train, and pet your own virtual puppies. It's sold nearly 500,000 copies in a single month, making

Nintendo's philosophy has always been that the handheld and console markets have different audiences and different demands and that software should reflect these differences. Sony's philosophy is that people want the same gaming experience on the go that they get at home. Both have their merits, but people don't buy philosophies—they buy games. Hell, they buy nongames, too. People want software, period, and right now, the PSP has nothing. And without software, Sony's impossibly powerful handheld will end up a shiny, black paperweight. «

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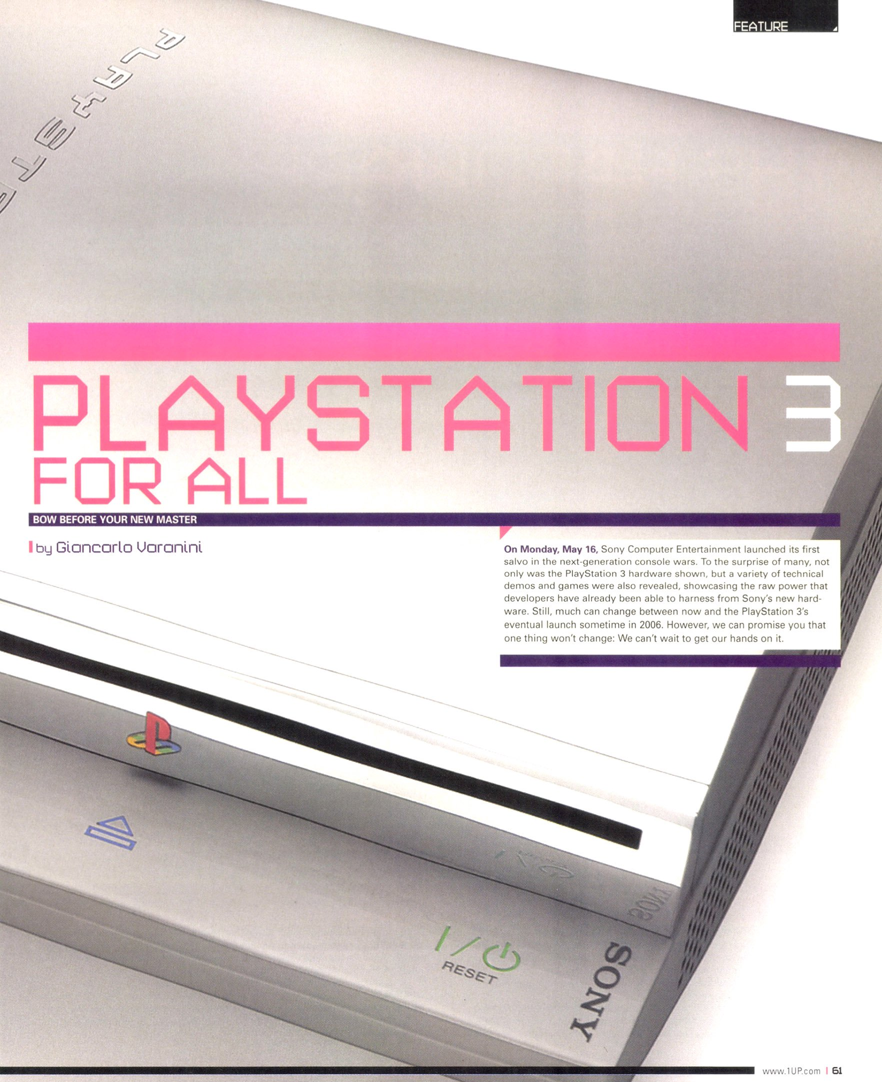
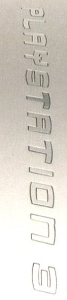


PLAYSTATION 3 FOR ALL

BOW BEFORE YOUR NEW MASTER

by Giancarlo Varanini

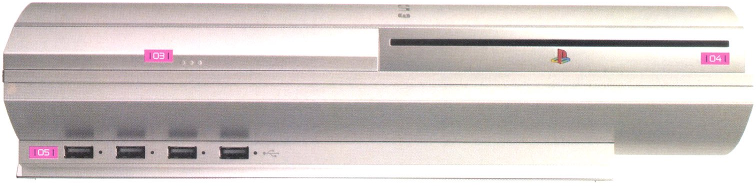
On Monday, May 16, Sony Computer Entertainment launched its first salvo in the next-generation console wars. To the surprise of many, not only was the PlayStation 3 hardware shown, but a variety of technical demos and games were also revealed, showcasing the raw power that developers have already been able to harness from Sony's new hardware. Still, much can change between now and the PlayStation 3's eventual launch sometime in 2006. However, we can promise you that one thing won't change: We can't wait to get our hands on it.



THE HARDWARE

SOMETHING BORROWED

The PlayStation 3's design isn't terribly shocking or unique, and for good reason. It seems this time around, Sony was going for a more general consumer-electronics look as opposed that of a videogame console. While we definitely approve of the sleek and practical design, the *Spider-Man* font on the front of the system really needs to go.



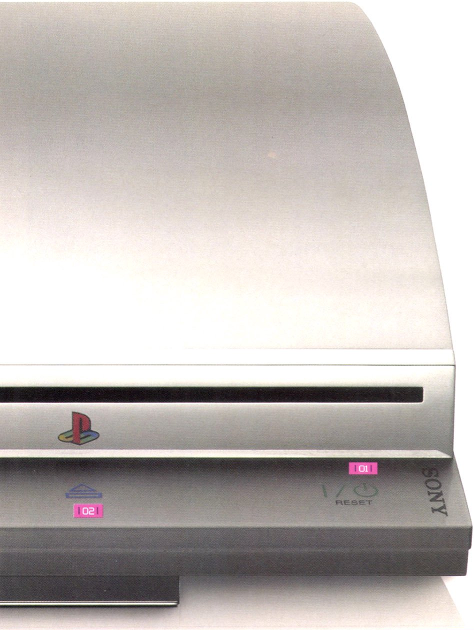
BUSINESS UP FRONT

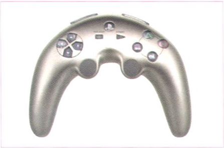
| 01 | POWER/RESET | 02 | EJECT | 03 | MEMORY CARD FLAP | 04 | SLOT DRIVE | 05 | USB PORTS

Thankfully, DVD-player manufacturers and other makers of CD- or DVD-related equipment discovered that front-loading devices with trays are stupid. You can accidentally snap them off, or hit them, forcing them to close by accident. Then there's the problem with jamming and the tray motor failing. The PlayStation 3 appears to follow the current trend with its slot loading design [04]—you just pop in the disc and the console automatically sucks it in.

There's not much else to the front of the console, aside from eject [02] and power/reset icons [01] located on the front of the console along with four USB ports [05]. These ports will be particularly important because they not only serve as a connection point between the PSP and the PlayStation 3 (though wireless connections are also possible), but can also be used to recharge the system's wireless controllers (of which you'll be able to use up to seven). You can also expect to see some other devices take advantage of the USB ports, including EyeToy-type peripherals.

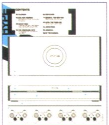
Hidden underneath the flap to the left of that logo are all of the memory card slots [03]. The PS3 will support Sony's own Memory Stick and Memory Stick Duo technology, along with CompactFlash and SD memory card formats. There's also a 2.5-inch removable hard drive involved in all of this, but Sony hasn't exactly made clear what it plans to do with that.





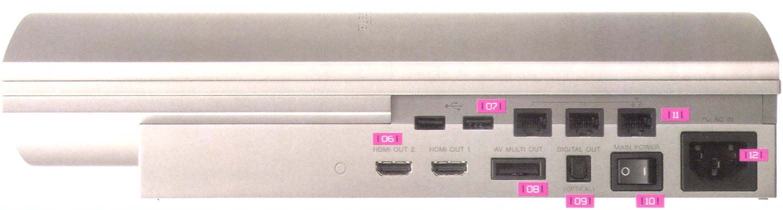
A CONTROLLER FROM DOWN UNDER

Yes, the new PlayStation 3 controller looks like a boomerang. We can't say we particularly care for this design, since it looks a tad bit uncomfortable for most hands. You may be asking why Sony didn't just use the DualShock design, and the answer to that may have to do with the lawsuit from Immersion about its force-feedback technology. Still, it's incredibly cool that the controller is powered by Bluetooth technology (the same wireless tech you find in mice, cell phones, and similar equipment). You should rarely have problems with signal degradation, and best of all, the controllers are rechargeable through the PlayStation 3's USB ports. At any rate, we've been assured this is just a prototype, and like the PlayStation 3, its design may change over the coming months. We sure hope so.



FLASHBACK

You might remember this from our November issue with *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* on the cover [#86]. It was our concept design of the PlayStation 3 based on feedback from developers and readers. While we didn't quite nail the design of the system, we came pretty close in terms of features. Both have wireless controllers, a slot loading system, and a little flap for all of the memory card inputs. That's about it. Had we known Sony was such a huge fan of Bose DVD players, we may have approached it differently.



PARTY IN THE REAR

| 06 | HDMI OUTPUTS | 07 | USB PORTS | 08 | AV OUT | 09 | OPTICAL OUT | 10 | POWER SWITCH | 11 | NETWORK PORTS | 12 | AC-IN

A lot of the cool new features are on the back of the console. There you'll find two HDMI outputs [06], which will allow you to hook up your PlayStation 3 to two HDTV monitors. HDMI is a full digital video and audio connection method, so you can't really get a cleaner signal, unless you have some sort of video technology from the future. Most HDTVs come equipped with HDMI inputs, but a few of the older models have only DVI, which is just a digital video signal with no audio. Fortunately, the technology is backward compatible, so you should be able to get by with using an HDMI-to-DVI adapter. There's still a traditional PlayStation audio/video connector [08] if you don't have an HDMI-capable TV.

Accompanying all of this newfangled technology is an optical out [09] for hooking up the PS3 to a home theater audio system. If you haven't had time or money to do so, it'd be a smart idea to invest in a good sound setup to take full advantage of the PS3's high-end audio capabilities. There are two more USB ports [07], in case the four in the front aren't enough for you. It also has three network ports [11], a power cutoff switch [10], and, of course, the AC-in [12], which is different from the one on the PS1 and PS2. We're not exactly sure why there are so many different network ports on the system. We assume this has to do with using the PlayStation 3 as a media hub of some sort, but it's anyone's guess at this point.

THE GAMES

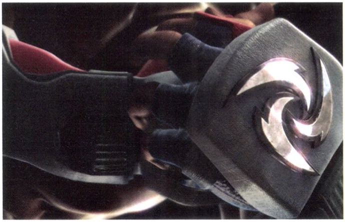
MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY PICTURE?

A number of PlayStation 3 projects were shown at Sony's E3 press conference, but there's still some debate as to how many of them were actually created on PS3 hardware and how many were prerendered target videos, or, basically, what developers expect their games to look like. We give our thoughts on which demos could be done on the PlayStation 3 and which seem like they're not quite as plausible.

KILLZONE

JUDGMENT: BOTH?

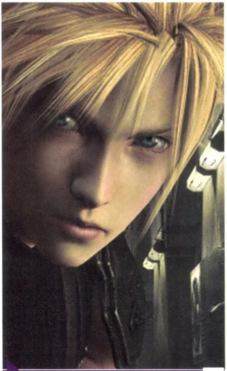
Easily the most spectacular of all the PlayStation 3 demos, we find it hard to believe that it was done in real time. Sure, it still looks like *Killzone* (with a significantly higher polygon count), but some of the sequences just look way too amazing. Interestingly, a representative from Sony Europe told *OPM* that most of the demo was done on the hardware. Believe it or not!



TEKKEN

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

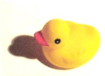
Normally, for something like this, we'd say it was prerendered, but take into consideration that there's only a single character, Jin, onscreen and that it's Namco that made him, and you have some pretty good evidence to the contrary. We doubt the final model will look as good, but just look at that sheen of sweat. Look at it!



FINAL FANTASY VII

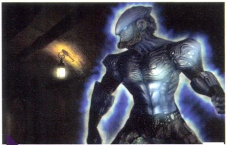
JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

This was the only demo that truly provoked curse words from members of the audience. In fact, it not only obliterates the CG used for the opening sequence of the original PS1 game, but it also obliterates just about everything else out there. Too bad Square Enix doesn't actually want to create a PS3 remake.



RUBBER DUCKY

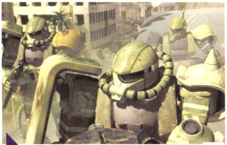
You're the one to make PlayStation 3 technical demos so much fun. Sony's Phil Harrison showed off the rubber ducky processing power of the PlayStation 3 by filling the screen with dozens, if not hundreds, of the yellow bathtime companions. Some cool stuff.



FIFTH PHANTOM SAGA

JUDGMENT: THERE WERE FOUR OTHER SAGAS?

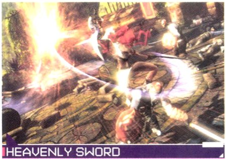
What do you think of when someone says Sonic Team? Why *Phantom Saga*, of course! Sega, not only could you have at least created something a little bit more impressive, but you could've also chosen a game or series that at least one person in the audience actually cares about, like *Sonic* perhaps?



GUNDAM

JUDGMENT: COULD GO EITHER WAY

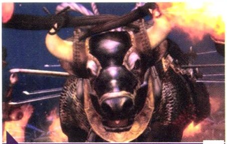
OK, so *Gundam* doesn't exactly look spectacular, but it looks really freaking good—in fact, far too good—for a series that has typically been rather blah in the graphical attractiveness department. The only thing that leads us to believe that the demo wasn't completely prerendered is some of the texturing on the Gundams.



HEAVENLY SWORD

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

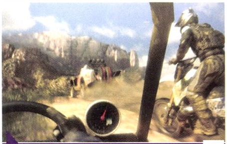
Heavenly Sword has been in development for an incredibly long time. We first saw shots of it several months ago, so with that in mind, we have to say that the demo was done in real time, even though it was easily one of the more impressive demos at the conference. Just imagine Kratos as a ninja, and you have a pretty good idea.



NI-OH

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

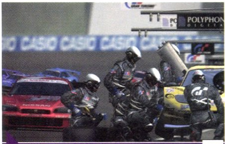
Koei knows how to handle new hardware pretty well, so it's no surprise that *Ni-Oh* looks the way it does. At first glance, it doesn't seem all that impressive. But when you consider how many characters are onscreen at once and the fact that they look as good as most characters from PS2 fighting games, then it becomes clear.



MOTOR STORM

JUDGMENT: PRERENDERED—OR NOT?

There's no way. There's just no way this was done in real time. The actual demo video of *Motor Storm* looks as prerendered as it gets, with its insane lighting and incredible amount of detail, but the screenshots tell a different story. You can spot a few of those pesky jaggies and clipping associated with real-time demos. So which is it?



VISION GRAN TURISMO

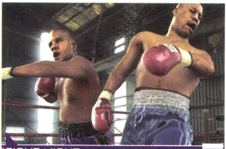
JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

Can anyone explain to us why Polyphony would want to show the *Gran Turismo 4* engine with some touch-ups? Yeah, the pit crew looks great, but so what? We just hope Yamauchi and his team come up with something a little more worthwhile for *Gran Turismo 5*. Either that or skip the graphical improvements and give us online play.

DEVIL MAY CRY

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

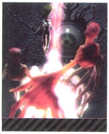
The fact that this demo was so brief is a sign that Capcom had only a short time to get something together on actual hardware. If the company did go the prerendered route, then it could've had a lot more to show than just a bland environment and a quick shot of Dante. At any rate, it's good to see Dante coming back.



FIGHT NIGHT

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

We'd seen a few shots of the Xbox 360 version of *Fight Night* floating around before the conference, so while we weren't completely blown away by what we saw, there's no denying how awesome the game looks. The physics involved when the glove makes contact with the face would probably be enough to bring the PS2 to its knees.



NVIDIA'S DEMO

Nvidia's demonstration of what its graphics processor, called the RSX (which powers the PS3), could do was pretty typical of the demos released for PCs when manufacturers want to show off some cool new special effects or features. The lighting and transparencies were the stars of this particular demo, but we also have to make mention of Nvidia's president, Jen-Hsun Huang, who seemingly has an unhealthy obsession with the female character (named Luna) presented in the demo.

WARHAWK

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

Nothing too fancy here—just a lot of ships onscreen at once and some typical aerial-combat-style environments. The soldiers look decent, but again, nothing too spectacular. This is just one of many projects that was probably too early to show, but Sony did it anyway. Still, we're glad that *Warhawk* is back.

I-8

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

It's too bad Sony showed the *Killzone* demo before Insomniac's demo of its first-person shooter *I-8*. Parts of the game look really good, particularly the seemingly *Half-Life 2*–inspired portions, and it has a lot of chaotic action. Still, Sony should've waited a few more months before baking this potato.

FORMULA 1

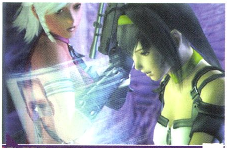
JUDGMENT: WHO CARES?

It's not that we dislike Formula 1 racing, but this was a pretty unspectacular demo. The physics look way off, which is usually a sign that the demo was prerendered, and the cars don't look substantially better than some of the stuff we've seen in the current generation. The lighting looks good, though. Huzzah for lighting!

THE GETAWAY

JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

There's no question that this demo was done in real time on hardware, since it basically took much of the information from the PS2 version of *The Getaway* and its sequel and added a new layer of PS3 paint on top of it to make London extra nice and shiny. Now, if Sony can only make the gameplay as good as the graphics.



EYEDENTIFY

JUDGMENT: PRERENDERED

We know this game is going to be a source of much entertainment for those who have nothing better to do than make lewd jokes to a couple of videogame characters. We will admit that the idea of being a Colonel Campbell character or Charlie from *Charlie's Angels* in a game sounds kind of cool.

KILLING DAY

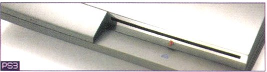
JUDGMENT: REAL TIME

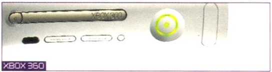
Again, there wasn't too much out of the ordinary in this demo that would suggest it wasn't done in real time. Granted, it's possible that it might've been done on PC hardware that mimics what the PlayStation 3 can do, but it's real time nonetheless. We're interested to see where Ubisoft goes with this game.

TALE OF THE GAME TAPE

HOW DO THE THREE NEXT-GENERATION CONSOLES STACK UP?

The Sony PlayStation 3, the Microsoft Xbox 360, and the Nintendo Revolution are all powerful, but each has its own advantages and disadvantages. While the PlayStation 3 may beat the Xbox 360 and perhaps even the Revolution from a purely technical standpoint, XB360 still has the edge in online play. Let's have a look:


PS3


XBOX 360

REVOLUTION

	PS3	XBOX 360	REVOLUTION
CPU	Cell Processor Power PC–based core at 3.2GHz One VMX vector unit per core 512KB L2 cache Seven SPEs at 3.2GHz Seven 128-bit 128 SIMD GPRs Seven 256KB SRAM for SPE One of the eight SPEs is reserved for redundancy Total floating-point performance: 218 GFLOPS	Three symmetrical cores at 3.2GHz each Two hardware threads per core; six hardware threads total VMX-128 vector unit per core (three total) 128 VMX-128 registers per hardware thread 1MB L2 cache	Custom IBM "Broadway" processor
GPU	RSX at 550MHz 1.8 TFLOPS floating-point performance Full HD (up to 1080p), two channels Multiway programmable parallel pipelines	Custom ATI graphics processor 10MB of embedded DRAM 48-way parallel floating-point dynamically scheduled shader pipelines Unified shader architecture Polygon performance 500 million triangles per second Pixel fill rate 16 gigasamples-per-second fill rate using 4x MSAA Shader Performance 48 billion shader operations per second	Custom ATI "Hollywood" graphics processor
SOUND	Dolby 5.1-channel, DTS, LPCM, etc. (Cell-based processing)	Multichannel surround-sound output Supports 48KHz 16-bit audio 320 independent decompression channels 32-bit audio processing Over 256 audio channels	Unknown
MEMORY	256MB XDR Main RAM at 3.2GHz 256MB GDDR3 VRAM at 700MHz	512MB at 700MHz GDDR3 RAM Unified memory architecture	Unknown
SYSTEM BANDWIDTH	Main RAM: 25.6GB/s VRAM: 22.4GB/s RSX: 20GB/s (write) + 15GB/s(read) SB: 2.5GB/s (write) + 2.5GB/s (read)	22.4GB/s memory interface bus bandwidth 256GB/s memory bandwidth to EDRAM 21.6GB/s frontside bus	Unknown
SYSTEM FLOATING-POINT PERFORMANCE	2 TFLOPS	1 TFLOP	Unknown
STORAGE	HDD: Detachable 2.5-inch HDD slot	Detachable and upgradeable 20GB hard drive Memory Unit support starting at 64MB	Unknown
I/O	USB: Six USB 2.0 ports (four in front, two in rear) Memory Stick: standard/Duo, PRO (one port) SD: standard/mini (one port) CompactFlash: Type I, II (one port) Bluetooth controller (supports up to seven)	Wireless game controller (four) USB 2.0 ports (three) Memory unit slots (two)	GameCube controller ports (four) USB 2.0 (2 ports) 512MB SD memory (2 ports) Wireless controllers
COMMUNICATION	Ethernet: 10BASE-T, 100BASE-TX, 1000BASE-T (one input, two outputs) Wi-Fi: IEEE 802.11b/g Bluetooth 2.0 (EDR)	Xbox Live Built-in Ethernet port Wi-Fi ready: 802.11a, 802.11b, and 802.11g	Nintendo Online Service Wi-Fi
A/V OUTPUT	Screen size: 480i, 480p, 720p, 1080i, 1080p HDMI: HDMI out (two ports) Analog: A/V multi out Digital audio out	All games supported at 16:9, 720p, and 1080i, antialiasing Standard-definition and high-definition video output supported	Digital audio and video
DISC MEDIA	CD: PlayStation CD-ROM, PlayStation 2 CD-ROM CD-DA: CD-DA (ROM), CD-R, CD-RW SACDL: SACD Hybrid (CD layer), SACD HD DualDisc: DualDisc (audio side), DualDisc (DVD side) DVD: PlayStation 2 DVD-ROM, PlayStation 3 DVD-ROM, DVD-Video (DVD-ROM, DVD-R, DVD-RW, DVD+R, DVD+RW), Blu-ray (PlayStation 3 BD-ROM, BD-Video, BD-ROM, BD-R, BD-RE)	Support for DVD-Video, DVD-ROM, DVD-R/RW, DVD+R/RW, CD-DA, CD-ROM, CD-R, CD-RW, WMA CD, MP3 CD, JPEG Photo CD Ability to stream media from portable music devices, digital cameras, and Windows XP–based PCs Custom playlists in every game Built-in Media Center Extender for Windows XP Media Center Edition 2005	Proprietary 12-centimeter optical discs

EPIC REIN

UNREAL ENGINE LEADS THE PS3 CHARGE, AND EPIC'S MARK REIN IS THE GENERAL

We had a chance to speak with Mark Rein, vice president of Epic Games, to get the lowdown on the Unreal Engine technology demo shown at the PlayStation 3 unveiling, as well as a variety of other topics surrounding Sony's next-generation hardware.

OPM Can you give us a general timeline for the process of creating the Unreal PlayStation 3 demo?
MARK REIN We got the development kits about two months before the demo, and we had the engine up and running within the first week. We spent the rest of the time optimizing the demo. For the actual content for the demo, which runs on Unreal Engine 3, we did most of the work on the PC and then just copied it over to the PlayStation 3 and just ran it. I'd say it took about two to three weeks for the demo once we got the engine up and running.

OPM So it's that easy to develop for the PlayStation 3?
MR Absolutely. The PlayStation 3 stuff is easy to get up and running because it uses Open GL and Linux, as well as Nvidia graphics and Power PC architecture. It's also a testament to the Unreal Engine 3 compatibility. If we wanted to look at a shader and know what it was going to look like on PlayStation 3, we didn't have to learn it on the PS3—we could learn it on the PC, and it really looks exactly the same.

OPM Did your team have any goal in mind with the demo? Did you want to show off a specific feature?
MR Well, Sony asked us to do something unique, which is pretty difficult. In that time, we had to create characters and modify the environments. Those characters will be in *Unreal Tournament 2007*. We had to build the content, the shaders, and the characters in time for the demo, so that made it a little complicated. We wanted something with a cinematic feel because we knew we were going to have a limited amount of time on stage and we didn't want the variability of somebody trying to play [a full game] in real time and screwing up. If you saw the *UT2007* demo at Midway, we had a little cinematic and then somebody played the demo. It's a little different every time, so for a demo with this level of importance, we wanted to avoid that.

We knew we were going to create a matinee sequence. Matinee is one of the tools we have in Unreal Engine 3 to do cinematics. It's real time and it's done within the engine, but it's prescripted. We wanted a fight sequence that looked really next generation and cinematic, so our art directors and designers came up with ideas. I thought it worked out really well. The camera work was really good; one guy actually did all of that camera work in a couple of days.

OPM When we were looking at the other demos, there was some skepticism about them being done in real time on the PS3 hardware. What did you think of them?
MR The demos that Phil Harrison did and the demos that Epic and Electronic Arts did are all in real time. The other ones were obviously shown as movies, but I have no idea how they were created. Anytime you have technology on a new system you're going to be facing a lot of hurdles, especially when it's a very early system. We were very proud to show a real-time demo.

OPM Given what you've experienced with the hardware so far, would you say that the other demos are feasible?
MR I didn't really look at the other demos enough to say. [But] what will happen later on is that those games will all come out and they'll all look great. They show everything that you remember. Look at *Gran Turismo*. It was called *Vision Gran Turismo*, so clearly it was a vision statement, and they wouldn't have said that if it was an actual demo. That is their vision of what *Gran Turismo* would look like on PlayStation 3. I saw that and thought, I don't see any reason why *Gran Turismo* wouldn't look that way on PlayStation 3.

I think what will happen is that when those games come out, unless you were looking closely at that video, you'll remember that they don't look quite as good. In other words, there's the vision that a lot of people try to create versus the practicality of what they can pull off. Will

they be able to pull off as many effects as you saw in those movies? I don't know, but when those games come out, you won't think that they didn't [pull them off].

We barely scratched the surface of what the machine can do. We're already running in high definition at 30 frames per second and above. We threw a lot of stuff into that demo, but we'll be able to do a lot more once we get to play around with the Cell chip, so we're itching to see what we can do with the rest of that power.

OPM What does giving the first-ever PlayStation 3 demo do for Epic now that you're becoming a major player in the middleware area?
MR It gives us credibility on PlayStation, and that's important to us. There have been a lot of good games using Unreal Engine 2 technology, such as *Splinter Cell* and *Rainbow Six*. We had some experience there, but we were never a good fit for that platform. The PS2 generally took a lot of effort, and the people that made great games put a lot of effort into making sure they understood the different content requirements for the platform. The PS2 processor and the Unreal script just weren't terribly compatible, but I think that on PS3 we're a phenomenal fit. Everything that the PlayStation 3 is good at is what the Unreal Engine is designed for.

OPM The Unreal Engine 3 package includes online components?
MR Yeah. Online is kind of our thing. *Unreal Tournament* is one of the best online games on the PC. There's also *Unreal Championship 2* on Xbox. Online is what we do and what we've done consistently since 1999, but *UT* established Epic as an online company.

OPM Has Sony mentioned anything about its online strategy?
MR Sony's been a very open platform online. You've been able to do anything you want, and I think we're going to do an outstanding job online, assuming they do the same thing. They've given [developers] this freedom to do it their way in the past. We've had a pretty good track record for doing that on the PC side.

OPM Are you concerned at all that Sony is trying to do too much with the PlayStation 3?
MR I think it's the reverse. I think they [could potentially] sell the PlayStation 3 to people who aren't necessarily interested in videogames, and that's a good thing for game developers and the industry. Right now, they've sold almost 100 million PS2s, but if they can double or triple that, then we can start to put some downward pressure on the price of games for consoles. People are talking about raising the price of games—that's crazy. We have to bring out a machine to bring prices down, and I think the way to do that is to bring out a machine that does more. The idea that you can buy a PlayStation 3 and buy this high-definition camera and have a high-definition video conference with anyone else that has a PlayStation 3—that's incredible. I'll buy one for my parents so they can see my kids grow up in high definition. If my parents have a PlayStation 3, there's a good chance they'll ask [if there's a certain game that they can get], or they'll ask, "What else can I do?" I can transmit my pictures and send them and it's easier than doing it on the PC.

> "WE BARELY SCRATCHED THE SURFACE OF WHAT IT CAN DO."

I've never heard of anyone being turned off because of extra capabilities, but will we be able to get new consumers because of those extra capabilities? I think so. The high-definition camera is a perfect example. I think that's brilliant, and when you think about it—why would [consumers] do this now? The complications involved with [online conferencing] are insurmountable for most people, [which means that] most people aren't doing it, even though you can buy a nice quality webcam for next to nothing now. I think the Cell processor will break down a lot of those barriers. «

grand theft auto: liberty city stories

take me down to liberty city...

EXCLUSIVE first look at how rockstar is putting all of liberty city in your pocket

by thierry nguyen

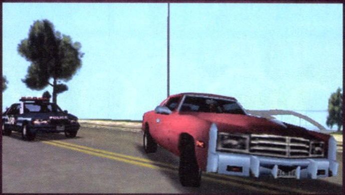
"Welcome to Liberty City; you're listening to Head Radio with DJ Michael Hunt."

That might have been what a certain criminal who lacks a name was listening to as he drove into the limits of Liberty City. It's been said that there are a million stories within any given city; one of the stories of Liberty City (as told in *Grand Theft Auto III*) is about the rise of the Man With No Name. He does a lot of work as a soldier for the Leone family early in his career, and at one point does some jobs for Toni Cipriani, a Leone capo. Toni has a bit role in *GTA3*, only giving No-Name a few missions that involve protecting Leone family interests. But in the world of *GTA*, there's always more going on than you can see, and now Rockstar aims to reveal some more of the big picture.

Cipriani just happens to be the man that you'll be playing in the next *GTA* game: *Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories*. And though it's appearing on the PSP rather than the PS2, this is still a full-fledged, brand-new *Grand Theft Auto* game, with the same massive city and open-ended gameplay one would expect—which just might make it the PSP's first killer app. Even in its early stage of development, *Liberty City Stories* is a full-blown *GTA* game, not a dumbed-down port or a quick cash-in. It's a 3D game with an open-ended city, a satirical look at American culture, and a fully realized crime story, all within the confines of your pocket.

all about toni

Toni Cipriani is one of Don Leone's capos (or a *capodecina*), a middleman between regular mob soldiers and the don himself. In *GTA3*, Cipriani has you doing work for him until he introduces you to the don. Even though you only do a few missions for him, you can tell that he's a little unbalanced. One big hint is the fact that he's voiced by Michael Madsen. Another is how he gives you a mission to blow up a Triad-owned fish factory because he wants his message to be "real biblical" due to the raining mackerel. Yet Cipriani is also a total momma's boy—he still lives at home and seeks mom's approval in his merciless mob dealings.



here we are now, entertain us...

The first thing we want to make clear is that even though this *GTA* takes place in Liberty City, it is by no means a mere port of *GTA3*. In fact, it takes place before the events of *GTA3*. The backstory is that Cipriani clips a made man under orders of Don Leone and hurriedly leaves town. As the dust settles, he returns to Liberty City and starts to work his way up the Leone chain of command.

So, how much earlier does *LCS* take place? Dan Houser, vice president of creative at Rockstar, answers, "It's about three years before. We always keep the years and stuff vague, but we are pretty obsessive with getting [the details] right. Some things are pretty easy—some titles I'm pretty confident we never get a year wrong, as there's never a song playing that isn't right. We [internally] have a set year, but we always just say, like, *San Andreas* was the very early '90s. *Vice City* was the mid-'80s. *GTA3* was the present day when it came out, so that'd be 2000, 2001. I think [*LCS*] is two or three years before that."

The three-year difference allows the game to generally feel the same as *GTA3*, but also lets it feature enough tweaks that it doesn't feel like a total transplant. Houser elaborates: "Everything is being changed; that's what we like. Well, buildings don't necessarily get changed, but some do. Most buildings don't change over the course of three years. We're looking at this as a...well, rather than being a sequel or an add-on pack or a different game, it's simply a different experience in the same world and in a slightly different time. So we think about what changes we need to make for the *GTA* fan to find that believable. Sometimes I think the strangest thing about this one is that most of the changes are pretty subtle. You know, people are dressed slightly differently. We changed up some of the signage, but not all of it. It sort of feels like, 'I think it's familiar. Oh, that building seems odd; that's something being built now. Other things are not there.' It's a few different things that instill a big difference in the player. But it can't feel too different or it'll feel like when you see certain science-fiction films and [the universe features] technology that [looks better] than what they have 30 years later [in that universe]. You know, that feels funny to me."

rollin' down the street...

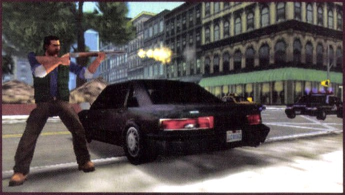
The inventory of cars is relatively identical to *GTA3*'s, but the cars themselves (such as the Mafia Sentinel, which we saw extensively) are slightly different. Houser points out, "Virtually, all of them have been f***ed with because it's supposed to be a three-years-earlier model." There is one major addition to the vehicle list, however: motorcycles, which aren't in *GTA3*, instead making their first PS2 appearance in *Vice City*. Houser elaborates: "That was something we couldn't do [in *GTA3*] simply due to lack of time and money and the fact that there were so many other technical problems. Each day you solve a lot of technical problems, and you can't always solve all of them, and that was one that we just didn't have the time or resources for. Then we added them in *Vice*, and then we started doing *Liberty City Stories*—you know, for me, as someone who's quite wimpy in real life, who isn't riding motorbikes around the world, it's the most fun."

feel like going home...

Why revisit Liberty City? Houser explains: "We definitely wanted to do something in Liberty City because it's the [city that's been around the longest]. So it's interesting for the artists and everyone else to be reworking that stuff. And also, I just think that the mob characters are some of the ones that were the least detailed. From a creative standpoint, we were busy learning all the techniques when we did *GTA3*, like the way we do all the motion capture, the way we design the characters, the way we design the whole game flow. So the characters [in *GTA3*] might not be the most detailed, but

houser reinforces the basic philosophy of gta: lcs

"We never looked at it like it was a portable game. In terms of the amount of content they made for this game, I mean, it's budgetarily high, but I don't care about money too much. Budgetwise, I would really be surprised if there were more expensive handheld games ever made, but content-wise, I can be very confident in saying there has never been anything on a handheld like this. We've never looked at it like it's a handheld game apart from the technical challenge that Rockstar Leeds faced in terms of getting that thing to perform. That's the only thing—and the slightly limited storage facilities on the UMD compared to the DVD. Those are the only things where we've gone, 'Well, it's a handheld game.' On everything else, we're not skimping—not the effort, not the people involved. We're using our premier teams in New York and in Edinburgh to help out with content creation."



they're still some that people relate to most, because I think the mob stuff is so appealing. So it's fun to go and revisit some of those guys a few years earlier and see how they got into the messes they got into in *GTA3*. So that's some of the story perspective we found fundamentally very interesting to muck around with, having it be lots of new characters and some old characters."

chill with the voltron crew...

Astute *GTA* fans would have noticed the appearance of a certain No-Name from *GTA3* in *San Andreas* or even spotted the early appearance of Donald Love in *Vice City* before he become the mogul he is in *GTA3*. *LCS* fits in to this grand master plan, which Houser elaborates on: "For people who like the character stuff, I think we've done a really good job of filling in detail and stories and giving you interesting new facts on these characters and rounding them out sort of. The bit I loved in *San Andreas* was when you see how Maria and Salvatore get together in Las Venturas, so we wanted to see a few more things like that be filled in. Kind of like, 'Oh, that's how they started like that.' If you've never played [the other games], you wouldn't think anything of it, and it wouldn't make the experience in any way worse. But if you have been obsessed with the previous stories, it helps fill in the sense of the world. It's not too tightly bound together to the point where it feels phony, but it's nice and connected."

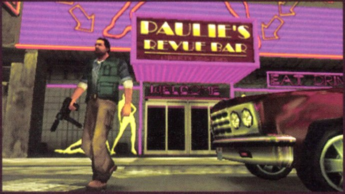
Houser pauses before launching into his explanation of how Rockstar is building the *GTA* franchise into more of a universe than a string of stories: "That's the challenge, I think, with all of that stuff. These aren't meant to be straight sequels; they're just meant to be things that coexist in the same world. So, you know, tertiary stories can become primary stories suddenly, and primary stories can become something you see in the back of a scene. And just going around that stuff, I think, is really fun, but equally, you want people to have some things new and some things old [in] each game. I read some people on the Internet saying, 'Oh, I don't like *San Andreas* because not enough of the characters are new.' Well, isn't that cool? To me it was cool that you saw some old characters. But we don't want to do something with just old characters. You want a good balance of old and new, you know, so we can keep inventing some good characters that are even weirder than the ones that we've done, so that we can keep pushing it forward and it doesn't get too incestuous. But it just helps to build the sense of a really big...you know, the whole of America through some distorted prism, that's the *GTA* world. And we're constantly injecting new things into that and revising old things in a different way. Everything has to progress."

"these aren't meant to be straight sequels."

whoa, we're halfway there...

So while *LCS*'s setting looks and feels like the Liberty City of *GTA3*, does the game play the same? Yep, as we're shown in a couple of early missions. Once again, Don Leone is having trouble with the local Triads, and so we see Toni hop on a chopper and motor over to a warehouse to pick up some cash, only to see the warehouse explode, money flapping everywhere. Of course, Triad members were hiding in wait, and this mission demonstrates a useful tweak made to the targeting system—enemies are flagged with red arrows, and green arrows mark mission objectives (like stacks of loose cash that need to be picked up).

PD
POLICE
LCPD



houser on the power of the PSP

"The machine is not as powerful as PS2, but it's pretty f***ing powerful for what it does, and the screen is so beautiful. I think our thing was if we're going to get involved [with] a system that we haven't conventionally gotten involved in, [like handhelds], it has to be stuff we can put our sense, our personality into. I think what's amazing about PSP, for a handheld, is we can do that. I don't think on a Game Boy you can really do games the way we like to make them. They're not heavily multi-puzzle games and that kind of thing. And so we only were going to get involved in that if we could really do something that we would feel that good about, what our high standards would be with the content and the quality of the gameplay and stuff."

A second mission starts off at Paulie's Revue Bar, which is the *LCS* version of Luigi's Sex Club from *GTA3*. There, Toni is told about an imminent attack from the Sindacco family upon a Leone casino, and he's tasked with protecting the casino. After picking up an Uzi from good ol' Ammu-Nation, Toni has to drive over to the casino and shoot down wave upon wave of enemy mafiosi. Each wave consists of explosive-rigged cars (at one point, the Sindaccos try to plow a Patriot, an armored Humvee, into the casino), culminating with a massive truck that Toni needs to drive a minimum distance away before it blows.

Just how big overall is the game? We asked Houser, and he furrowed his brows while answering: "Well, it's not as big as [*San Andreas*], because the world isn't as big. It's roughly halfway between *GTA3* and *Vice City* kind of sizes. So the [time] it takes to play depends on the ability of the player, but it should be a nice, long, chunky game, but divided into nice, small chunks you can get done while you're waiting for the bus or sitting on a plane."

it's hard to hold a candle...

It's evident that the game is a true, massive *GTA* title, so how on earth did Rockstar manage to squeeze all of it into the PSP? We asked for some details on Rockstar's process for fitting *LCS* onto the PSP, and Gordon Hall, studio director of Rockstar Leeds, answers: "We compressed and optimized every aspect of the game, from the way the geometry was stored, right down to how the animation system was fed data. We changed the way the city is structured—seek time is a killer on the PSP, not the actual loading, so we have adapted Liberty City's world structure to enable us to burst in the data we need when we need it. However, someone playing the game will be unaware of these changes, as they are purely related to the way data is organized and accessed on the disc."

When questioned about the possible effect that *LCS* would have on battery life, Hall explains: "The process of laying the data and code paths out to facilitate elegant streaming automatically ensures we are as battery friendly as possible. We will always push the battery harder than other, less ambitious titles, but we are getting great results from the technology the guys here have created. It helped that we had been developing our next-generation handheld engine for over a year before starting work on the game. We were always aware that memory and battery life would be the main obstacles standing in [our] way."

how on earth did rockstar squeeze all of it into the PSP?

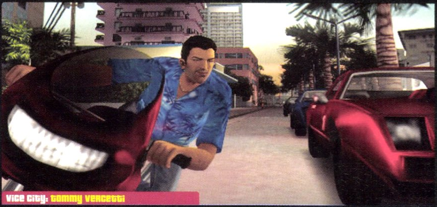
all that she wants is another baby...

That's right, while the game was formally announced just now, the technology underlying it has been around for a bit, actually. Hall specifies, "The engine itself has been in development for two and a half years now; it reached maturity around last May and has been tightened and honed ever since." In effect, the team has been working on the PSP engine ever since the PSP itself was announced two years ago.

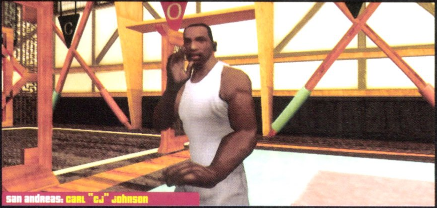
Hall continues: "As we had already prepared our engine, it took us only three weeks to have *LCS* fully up and running on the PSP. It's so important to blast through the early development stages and get to the point where you can play the game. Once you have the game in your hands, it starts to tell you what it needs to grow."

gta timeline

the history of crime, rockstar style

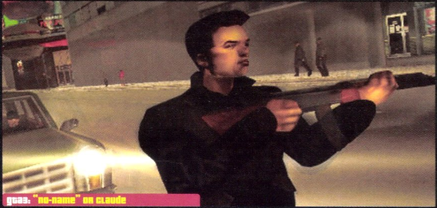


vice city: tommy vercetti



san andreas: carl "cj" johnson

liberty city stories: toni cipriani



gta3: "no-name" or claude

vice city

- Tommy Vercetti is arrested, refuses to roll on his boss (Sonny Forelli), and is sentenced to 15 years in prison.
- After being released from maximum security, Tommy returns to Liberty City to report to Sonny Forelli. He is sent to Vice City.
- Tommy meets lawyer Ken Rosenberg, who arranges a meet and greet at a boat party.
- Tommy meets real estate magnate Avery Carrington, who asks him to undermine his competition. Tommy also briefly meets Donald Love, an apprentice to Carrington.
- Tommy meets Kent Paul, a local music magnate who is friends with Rosenberg.
- After much strife, Tommy establishes his own empire in Vice City.
- Ken Rosenberg leaves Vice City after Tommy seizes control.

san andreas

- Carl "CJ" Johnson moves to Liberty City from Los Santos to get away from his rough life.
- Five years later, CJ returns to Los Santos to bury his mother.
- CJ meets Catalina, a complete psycho whose idea of a date is armed robbery. After a series of robberies, Catalina breaks up with CJ and runs off with the man who would become No-Name in *GTA3*. Interestingly enough, No-Name is referred to as "Claude" in San Andreas.
- CJ meets Wu Zi Mu, the head of the Triad in San Fierro. Wu Zi Mu is expanding into Las Venturas territory and has to deal with the Sindacco family in his effort to expand.
- While cruising the desert, CJ runs into Kent Paul, who is high on peyote. Kent suggests that they meet his friend Ken Rosenberg in Las Venturas.
- Through Ken Rosenberg, CJ meets Salvatore Leone in Las Venturas. Salvatore asks CJ to clean out St. Mark's Bistro in Liberty City.

liberty city stories

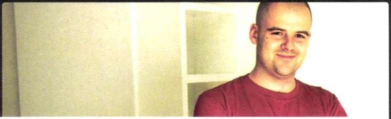
- Toni Cipriani returns to Liberty City after having been banished to a yet-to-be-revealed location. One of his missions is to counter a Sindacco offensive against the Leone family.

gta3

- No-Name, aka Claude, is betrayed by Catalina during a robbery, gets shot, and is left for dead.
- Claude works his way around Liberty City and ends up doing some work for the Leone family, first for Joey (Salvatore's son), then for Toni Cipriani (Salvatore's capo), then for Salvatore himself. In the process, Claude hooks up with Salvatore's girlfriend, Maria.
- Maria tells Claude that Salvatore knows about them and has offered Claude up as a sacrifice to the Colombian cartel.
- Claude flees with Maria and joins the Triad, which is under the control of Asuka and Kenji.
- Asuka sends Claude to assassinate Salvatore Leone.
- On the side, Claude performs missions for Liberty City business mogul Donald Love and helps Love acquire some valuable assets. Love promptly disappears.
- Claude realizes that Catalina is part of the Colombian cartel that's been peddling SPANK in Liberty City.
- Claude takes down Catalina and runs away with Maria.

MR. GTA

dan houser on plots, portable systems, and pushing back



OPM How do you balance the cinematic story and open-gameplay aspects of *GTA*?

dan houser Well, that's something we've always dealt with from a very serious perspective in *GTA* compared to other games that we've worked on, like *Max Payne*. The whole essence of the original game that we've always stuck to are these two ideas of freedom and nonlinearity; you always give the player the choice of what they can do next. So the way that the story has to unfold is more complicated because you have to have different aspects of the story running parallel to each other rather than in sequence. You can't just do, "OK, I've got to meet you, and then I'm finished with you, and I've got to meet him."

We've been working with the same guys for five, six years now; we got good at figuring out how to retain things we thought were contradictory (nonlinearity and strong narrative), and I think we've gotten better at how we integrate those. And equally, the game is very big. The quickest playthrough I guess would be *GTA3* at 30 or 40 hours. That's a very long story. Many novels don't take that long to read, and the idea of a movie that's 30 or 40 hours is absurd. So if you choose to make it, it means your story has to have lots of aspects to it. It has to sprawl like an epic. You have to have that one story, and then my relationship with you, and then my relationship with him, then how you guys all interrelate—it then turns out you two hate each other. We had to figure out things like keeping pace, having good hit points where things come together; things change, and you move to the next part of the map and all that. The story's pace has to work, and we use the idea that some aspect of the narrative pushes you along while another aspect pulls you along. So like, "I've got to get out of here because this guy's going to kill me," then "I've got to go there because I want to meet that girl."

Game storytelling, the way that we see games going, is a more complicated process from the way that movies do it because games give control of the camera, or the control of what you're looking at in the shot, to the player. And that makes the experience fundamentally more engaging than any movie can be, because you can walk all the way around the set. You can do anything you want to. You can go over there if you want. And that means, to some extent, you get the sensation of actually being in the same world, so that means the story has to be kind of diffused around that world. We don't have some of the directorial control that any filmmaker has; we've given that to the player. That's why it's a player and not a watcher. But it is very interesting that people are talking, "Oh, games are the next thing." It's like, well, here's something that's not just commercially, but [also] creatively, the next thing because we are able to do stuff that's very active, that's engaging with the world. We're actually putting you into a fantasy world. And that does mean the storytelling is a more complicated process, because you've got the freedom to do the story your way.

OPM Do you ever feel like you're almost done with the *GTA* world?

DH Well, I think we really liked the world that we began for *GTA3* and we carried on this sort of weird, distorted version of America. I think we still sort of get a bit of mileage in that world now that we've [been] f***ing around with it. Once it starts to feel like we're churning out stuff, we'll talk of stopping, but just a little bit. But we don't feel that way at the moment. And we are very clear, and I hope what you saw today shows that: We are not interested in milking stuff to make money. I mean, of course we want to make money, it's a commercial company. But we actually are doing the most creative s*** we can, and we're actually making games that are good. We're not going to be like, "We need to maximize revenue." It's just not our way; we try to make commercial art here. And it has to be commercial because it's expensive and someone has to pay for it, but we do see it as art, and when it stops being like that, that's when we lose it.

[The *GTA* world] has been around a long time, and I don't think that we've ever done one that felt like whoring to us. But we work hard to make sure that [isn't] the case. We've been very, very aggressive about making sure every game has new features and new stuff to do. We're not just porting the existing games over to PSP because we can do it technically; we're spending a lot of time and a lot of money and using people that are very crucial company assets. Some of our best guys are making it an experience that blows away anything that you've seen on the PSP so far.

OPM That's significant.

DH Yeah. We don't do many games. And we're not interested in doing many games, because once we do, our really good guys can't do them, and [then] we start using assistants and the juniors to make games, and that's not how we do it. We want everything to feel like it is a Rockstar game from the ground up, [with] identity, personality, character, and gameplay all reminiscent of what that means. We've obviously done different genres and different styles, different games that have those production values and that core obsession to gameplay as well. We've always been about those two kinds of things more than other companies are very interested in doing, and those have always been our real obsessions. I think if we can't do that, it ain't us doing it, so what's the point of putting the logo on it?

Sure, from a commercial perspective you'll make more money in two years, but then you'll go out of business. From a creative perspective, it's just not interesting. We just do something that lets us go, "That's us. That represents the spirit of the company in the right way." You guys might not have to think that, but we have to think that before we can give it to you. You guys are free to think, "This is good; this is s***," whatever. That's your job. But to us, we have to believe that the game is good enough to go out, or it's just not worth it. We're only about doing excellent s***, because, trust me, it's virtually as hard to make a s*** game as it is to make a good game—that's the weird thing. So you might as well use that extra five percent of effort to make something that will ultimately please you. Also, we are lucky—we've had some success. What that buys, in our opinion, is the freedom to do the stuff as well as we possibly can. We've got some very successful and some very highly critically reviewed games, and we've got to keep that bar there. That's the challenge for us. Because otherwise it's just not interesting. And I think a lot of the stuff you see on PSP, they don't have very good people working on it. The stellar guys at these companies, they're not making it, clearly. Or they've lost their touch.

> "It's as hard to make a s*** game as it is a good game."

OPM We're always curious about how much in terms of resources you can really give to all these different platforms, particularly with the next gen almost here.

DH Well, I think that Sony's done an awesome job with the timing of PSP. We've still got plenty of guys that work for us—recruitment of top-quality people is always a difficult thing, particularly in game development. We try to grow slowly, and we try to get people that we believe are guys that are better than us to do stuff; otherwise, there's no point. That's why we're not releasing 20 games a year, which is what certain...other people might wish us to do. To us, it's not interesting. We're not doing 20 things here and 30 things there and 50 things for handhelds.

Also, if you want to ask, "Why did the PSP not sell as well as I thought it was going to?" well, consoles sell because of games. Machines sell because of games. No machine is cool enough to make me want to buy it if there's nothing to put on it. Not a VCR, not a DVD, not anything—DVD didn't sell until there were like eight things you could buy for it. It's stupid. I remember, like, March, after the PS2 launch in October—it was like PS2 is a no-go. There were no games that were worth playing. I mean, not for guys like us who will play anything, but for the mass market. And then, at the end of 2001, suddenly everybody had just come out with their big games, and it's been a cultural phenomenon since then. And that's what, hopefully, with the PSP, as we get these games right, will be the same kind of thing. But at the moment there is nothing...well, I can get one for free, but there's not a reason to really buy it. I've got to be honest.

OPM Yeah.

DH Until those things appear...you know....

OPM Well, *Lumines*.

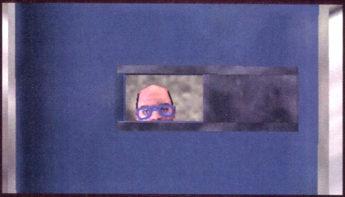
DH Well, right, yeah.

OPM Yeah, but you're right. Give me a reason to buy it.

DH It's vaguely interesting. There's nothing that *Tetris* used to be. You know, back in the day when that appeared, that was why I bought a Game Boy. You need that appeal; they need to have something exciting and fantastic that people will be playing all the time. And that's what we're interested in making: games that people play all the time.

Five things Rockstar isn't talking about

- Wireless play
- Which other characters are in the story
- Which songs are on the soundtrack
- What actors will be doing the voices
- Other gameplay aspects besides missions and open-ended driving



It's all of Liberty City, except a bit different...

- It's set a few years before *GTA3*
- You play as Toni Cipriani
- There are motorcycles
- It's longer than *GTA3* and shorter than *Vice City*

Houser reinforces Hall's point: "That's the way we make games. We have to have something onscreen. When it's just on paper with a few sketches, that's meaningless. We are real big believers in the tactile experience, and it's the same, or probably more so, on a handheld than on a console. The fundamental thing for any game at all is how it feels to move around that world—you know, we do a lot of third-person stuff—how it feels to control that character or that car. That's what the game is, and then you fill it out from that. So the design process starts, and then if the tech process starts at the same time, the Leeds team and the tech guys can get something onscreen, or on whatever the very early dev-kit things that were floating around were."

OK, so they were able to get some form of *GTA* running on the PSP, but were any sacrifices made? According to Houser and Hall, none, really. Houser explains: "The limitations are the graphical things—and that's not even finished code that you're looking at, and it's already looking pretty f***ing good, particularly when you see it on the full screen. But no, I mean, that's what we love about the guys at Leeds: They love a technical challenge. And they really can do wicked s*** with small resources, and that was the direction we built up around. We haven't really run into any major hurdles apart from the usual development ones. We're not massively bashing our heads into a wall because it's a PSP; it's just that game development is always stressful and it's always like, 'Why can't we do 10,000 things?' You know, we always look to be very ambitious in our design course and always hurt ourselves by doing that, but we get it done eventually after losing a lot of sleep."

Today is the greatest day I've ever known...

This ambition to make *GTA* work on the PSP is something that permeates the entire design process and philosophy of the game. Houser notes: "The fundamental core things of *GTA*, from the very first game, are freedom and nonlinearity. [*LCS*] plays like a more advanced version of *GTA3*. That's what our goal is. It's not like, 'Here's a restrictive theme' or 'Let's drop in some cars now, and a bike!' No. It's a videogame. There are things we've done slightly differently because it's a handheld. Those are things like making the missions a bit quicker, the cut-scenes a bit quicker. But the end player hopefully will never notice. They'll just notice that they're having a good time because all we've done is think about how we take an action-game experience and put it on a handheld.

"We're not trying to milk out that license or convince people they're buying something they're not," he continues. "It is a *GTA* game. It's the same—it will play very similarly. We're [adapting the game for portable play], but in a subtle way so you'd never notice and go, 'Whoa, it doesn't feel like *GTA*.' It's just a slightly more natural experience. But nothing's limited that wasn't limited before. Nothing's done with lower production values. We [did] a lot of voiceovers recently, and people were like, [*Says in a funny voice*] 'Is that a Game Boy?' and I'm like, 'F***ing hick,' because no one's ever done voiceovers like that before. Having played a lot of early PSP stuff, people have skimped on production values in my opinion. To go to the point we've gone to with *GTA*, it has to have high production value. Our goal is [to create an] interactive TV show. This is just one you happen to be watching on a very small plasma screen." «

> "We're not trying to milk out that license."

Pub. Rockstar Games **Dev.** Rockstar Leeds **Release** Fall

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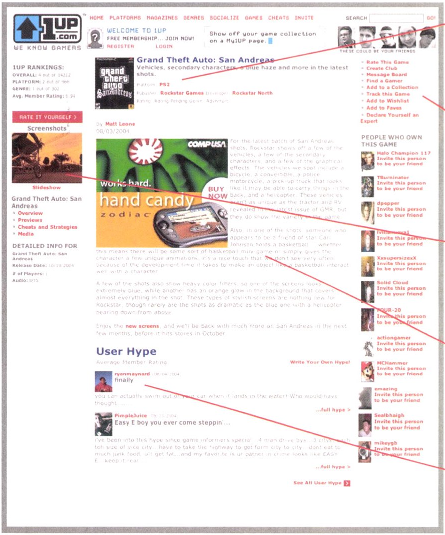

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- Overview
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- Media

DETAILED INFO FOR
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas
Release Date: 10/19/2004
# of Players: 1
Audio: DTS

Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas

Vehicles, secondary characters, a blue haze and more in the latest shots.

Platform: **PS2**
Publisher: **Rockstar Games** Developer: **Rockstar North**
Rating: Rating Pending Genre: Adventure

by **Matt Leone**
08/03/2004

For the latest batch of San Andreas shots, Rockstar shows off a few of the vehicles, a few of the secondary characters, and a few of the graphical effects. The vehicles we spot include a bicycle, a convertible, a police motorcycle, a pick-up truck that looks like it may be able to carry things in the back, and a helicopter. These vehicles aren't as unique as the tractor and RV revealed in the latest issue of GMR, but they do show the variety in the game.

Also, in one of the shots, someone who appears to be a friend of star Carl Johnson holds a basketball ... whether this means there will be some sort of basketball mini-game or simply gives the character a few unique animations, it's a nice touch that we don't see very often because of the development time it takes to make an object like a basketball interact well with a character.

A few of the shots also show heavy color filters, so one of the screens looks extremely blue, while another has an orange glow in the background that covers almost everything in the shot. These types of stylish screens are nothing new for Rockstar, though rarely are the shots as dramatic as the blue one with a helicopter bearing down from above.

Enjoy the **new screens**, and we'll be back with much more on San Andreas in the next few months, before it hits stores in October.

User Hype

Average Member Rating

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ryanmaynard (08/04/2004)
finally

you can actually swim out of your car when it lands in the water! Who would have thought.......

...full hype >

PimpleJuice (05/23/2004)
Easy E boy you ever come steppin'...

i've been into this hype since game informers special ...4 man drive bys ...3 citys each teh size of vice city ...have to take the highway to get form city to city ...dont eat to much junk food, u'll get fat....and my favorite is ur patner in crime looks like EASY E ...keep it real

...full hype >

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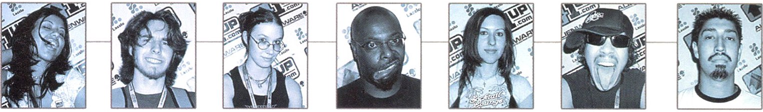

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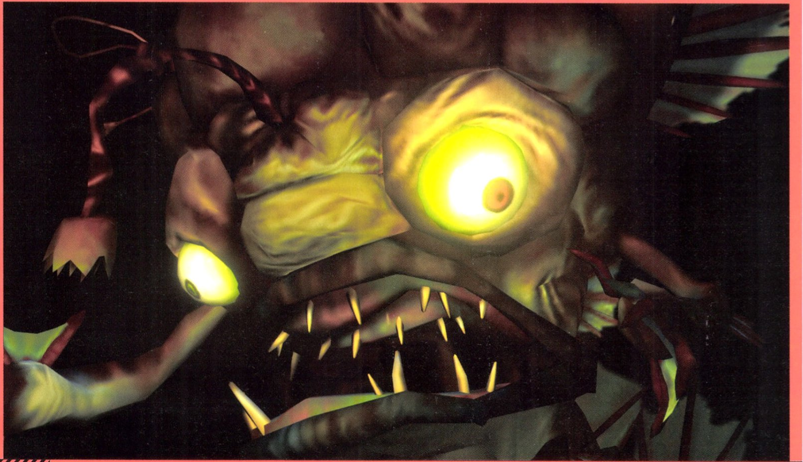

REVIEWS

80>

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

GAME OF THE MONTH

PSYCHONAUTS

BEYOND YOUR WILDEST IMAGINATION

RATING KEY

Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well...at least they're fun to rip apart.

[●●●●●]

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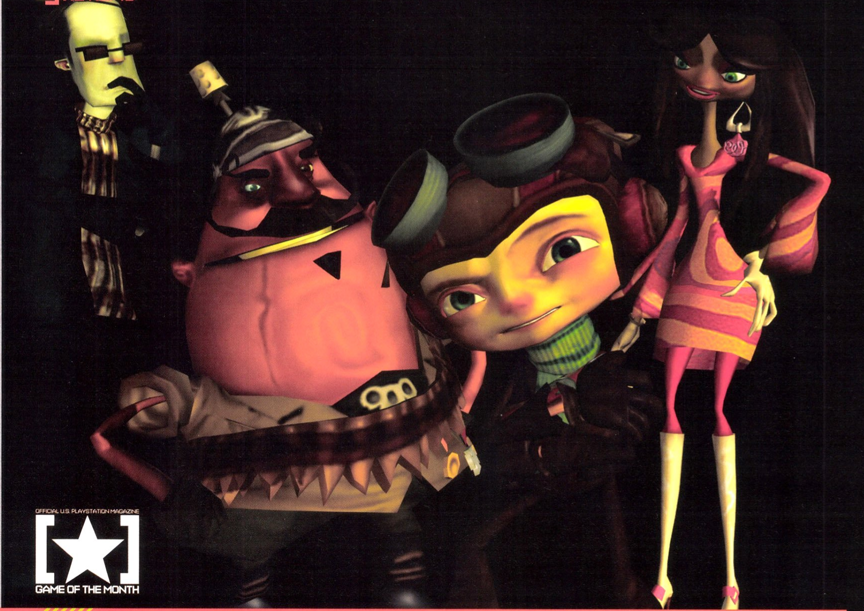


OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE

GAME OF THE MONTH

PSYCHONAUTS

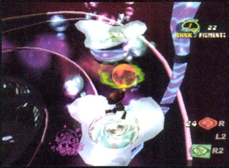
FREUDIAN SLIP

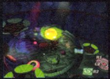
Never has psychology been portrayed so viscerally as it is in *Psychonauts*. While the game plays like just about any other platformer, it definitely doesn't feel like any other platformer. Tim Schafer has long made compelling games about very simple topics (the *Monkey Island* games were about being a pirate, *Grim Fandango* was about the afterlife, and *Full Throttle* was about how cool motorcycles are), and with *Psychonauts*, he decided to make a platformer about resolving one's mental issues.

Just to give a taste of the weird and wild writing in the game, the story is about a circus performer named Razputin who runs away to Whispering Rock Psychic Summer Camp to try to become a certified psychonaut before his father can come to take him home. I'll say this up front: no PS2 platformer has content (be it levels, characters, or even concepts) as creative as *Psychonauts*'. While the game design is borrowed and refined from various sources (more on that later), the content is original and inspired. Just the idea of entering each person's mind and sorting out his or her various psychoses is guaranteed to win *Psychonauts* some recognition in years to come. One mind belongs to a paranoid conspiracy theorist, and consists of disconnected puzzle pieces with plenty of *Men in Black*–style agents and puzzles. Another mind is of a actress who fell from grace; inside her head is a community theater with her life as a play being acted by endearing 10-year-olds. One mind has Raz playing a giant board game against Napoleon, while another casts him as a giant monster out to destroy a city guarded by a rival monster.

Besides the concepts of the levels, the writing is top-notch, as *Psychonauts* is easily the funniest game of the past five years. The humor is a mix of deadpan wit and straightforward zaniness. What helps is that the humor isn't movie specific, as many jokes in pop culture are; it touches on broader cultural sensibilities that pretty much everybody can understand. One moment, you'll listen to a kid talk about why he likes wrestling bears, and the next you'll find yourself listening to a lengthy story about a Civil War battle between Union soldiers and Dracula. Raz will converse with the famous poker-playing dogs, trade wits with a grotesque theater critic, and listen to the leader of a liberation front describe his plan to use flyers as revolution aids. It may sound a bit flat on paper, but once you actually play and hear the game in motion, it becomes flat-out hilarious. The writing and imagination that have gone into Psychonauts are unparalleled to date.

The actual gameplay is fine, but at times it feels a bit like reading a "favorite games" list. One can spot the targeting system of *Ocarina of Time*, the giant monster brawling of *War of the Monsters*, the collect-all-the-trinkets mentality of a Rare title like *Banjo-Kazooie*, and even the acrobatic platforming of *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*. This results in gameplay that feels very solid and refined, but not particularly innovative. While the twists of "collecting figments of imagination" and "sorting out





emotional baggage" and "opening memory vaults" fit the game contentwise, and as clever as the concepts are, they still boil down to collecting things. Thankfully, the levels are just as varied as the characters and concepts; there's a level about floating upward, one involving serious platforming skills, another focused purely on shooting, and even a level filled with point-and-click adventure-style puzzles.

The boss battles do a good job of staying interesting and unique. Again, it takes a page from *Zelda*, in the "That ability you just learned in this level? Use it against the boss" mechanic. The boss battles are varied and perfectly in tune with their respective levels; one is a multistage bullfight, another is a monster-movie brawl, and another is the repressed chaos of an otherwise perfectly ordered psyche.

As compelling as the rest of the game is, the final segment is downright aggravating. Without delving into spoiler material, the last level introduces both the dreaded escort mission and the timed sequence. Both turn out to be an elaborate ballet of trial and error. The person you're escorting often goes off on his own into certain sections of the level, and by the time you figure out how to get to him, he dies, leaving you to retry that segment again. By the time you figure out how to get from point A to B, you've died about six times already.

Also, the layouts of the last few levels reveal the weaknesses of the camera. Most of the levels are vast, open-air environments. But the last couple of levels take place in confined environments with lots of narrow halls and passages, and as a result, the camera has a hard time keeping up. Basically, the last couple of levels are filled with frustrating platforming, perturbing escorting, and sloppy camera positioning.

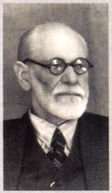
Another slight downer is that *Psychonauts* was developed for the Xbox originally, and this is a port. While the PS2 version is good, it's just not as pretty as the versions on other platforms; plus, it has slowdown issues on occasion.

Ultimately, despite technical annoyances and later-level frustrations, *Psychonauts* is an absolute joy to play. The rating I gave is purely a cold, objective number (which should give dissenters fodder to endlessly debate), when, ultimately, *Psychonauts* is just a game that you should pick up and enjoy. « *Thierry Nguyen*

RATIONAL Best humor writing yet, very creative, has fine and varied platforming gameplay
SCHIZOPHRENIC It plays like a port, the last few levels are aggravating, and the camera is extremely flawed for indoor levels

Pub. Majesco **Dev.** Double Fine/Budcat **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●○]

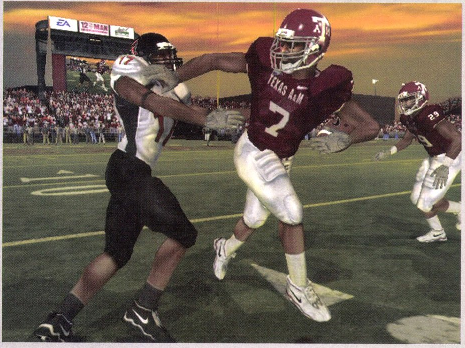


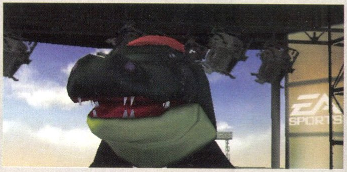
Much as *Grim Fandango* was inspired by Mexican Day of the Dead folklore, *Psychonauts* is rooted in Freud's book *The Interpretation of Dreams.*

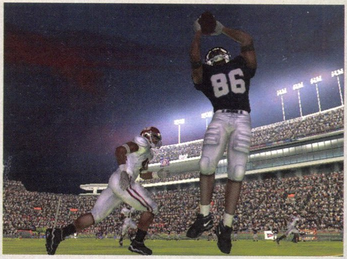
Sigmund Freud photo: Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division LC-USZ62-72266

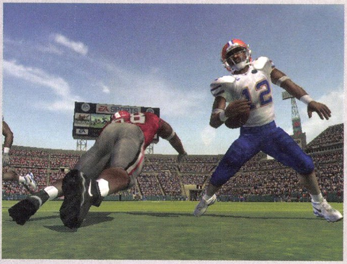
NCAA FOOTBALL 06

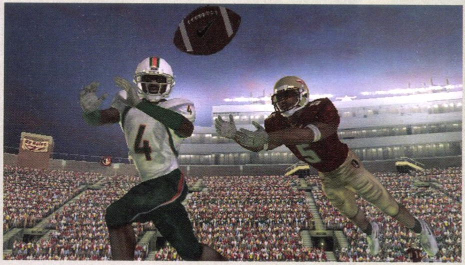
STOPPED SHORT OF THE FIRST











The Heisman Trophy—one of the most prized awards in all of sports—is the main focus of EA's *NCAA Football 06* and its new "race for the Heisman" mode. The twist of this mode is its emphasis on an individual player instead of the full team, so there's a little extra pressure to ensure that your own player does well, even if it comes at the expense of the rest of the team. Plus, many of the features found in the game's dynasty mode are now automated, which allows you to place your attention solely on your own player.

That said, race for the Heisman is still not all that much different from the dynasty mode—there's just a greater tendency to stack your player's stats. So, for example, if you're playing as a halfback, you may find yourself running the ball a little more than you normally would; likewise, if you're a quarterback, you might throw the ball more. Of course, if you happen to perform well over the course of the season, and if your chances of getting the Heisman are pretty good, then there's a little added tension as the season winds down. Otherwise, the race for the Heisman mode is just a slightly different coat of paint that is interesting for a few seasons but doesn't hold your attention quite like the dynasty mode does, especially now that the dynasty mode has the incredibly useful in-season recruiting option.

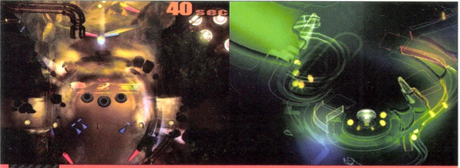
As far as gameplay goes, there are still a few issues, particularly with blocking. While downfield blocking seems to be really well done, inside blocking still has some problems. It just doesn't really feel like you can tear through a hole unless it's the size of the Grand Canyon. The assortment of jukes and stutter steps helps, as do the impact-player special moves (if your running back happens to be an impact player), but generally, inside running still feels a little clumsy. Conversely, the passing game is great, even if it hasn't been drastically altered since last year. It still feels sharp, and defensive backs usually play smart defense, forcing you to really expose and exploit weaknesses.

All around, *NCAA Football 06* is a great game, but most of the new features don't really feel like they're all that new. In other words, a lot of these are features we've seen either in *Madden*, such as the minigames, or in other football games. The race for the Heisman mode, in particular, is a good addition, but it just seems to fall short of really offering anything new or worthwhile. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Finely tuned gameplay, new presentation elements, minigames, in-season recruiting
CONS Race for Heisman falls a little short, impact-player special moves feel out of place

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●●○]



FLIPNIC: ULTIMATE PINBALL

DYING PASTIME TAKES A TURN FOR THE WEIRD

Now that pinball machines are found only in the rotted-out sanctuaries of American nostalgia—dive bars, greasy-spoon diners, and dilapidated mall arcades—I always drop a few bucks into any working table I come across. I'm amazed by the details of these machines; they're like miniaturized theme parks.

But in the videogame world of faster-than-life cars and larger-than-life explosions, pinball simulations seem static and tiny. *Flipnic* overcomes this problem by going above and beyond anything a real-world pinball machine could do. The ball physics stay firmly grounded in reality while left field gameplay ideas and table designs run wild.

The tables stretch across the area of four or five real machines, sprawling out into crazy, unpredictable layouts. Instead of just controlling the movement of the ball with a few flippers, you manipulate all kinds of objects: bumpers, spinning magnets, gates, and so on. The ball, on occasion, gains the ability to jump on command or shoot laser beams. *Flipnic* also takes on a more modern structure, adding *Tony Hawk*–like objectives that tour each table's finer details. But be prepared for frustration. Objectives can rely too heavily on near-random events, such as hitting a certain bumper a certain number of times. Nimble flipper skills are a must, but so are luck and patience.

Flipnic manages to stir pinball from its coma, if only for a while.The expanded table and wacky ideas are great, but it's the novel stuff that wears thin first. « *Robert Ashley*

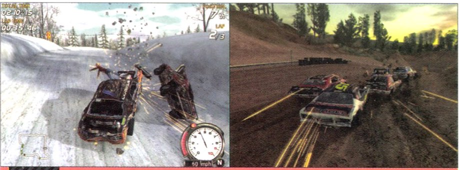
VERDICT An interesting direction for video pinball.

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** SCEI **ESRB** E **MSRP** $19.99

RATING ●●●○○

FOOSPONG

One minigame stands out from *Flipnic*'s mostly forgettable two-player mode: a simple version of foosball that replaces the usual spinning plastic players with *Pong* paddles. It's a great idea that's 30 years too late—but it's still intensely addictive.



FLATOUT

IT'S FLAT-OUT FUN...FOR A SHORT TIME

FlatOut is based on a fun idea—in this case, the wacky world of rag-doll physics. Sadly, the game doesn't seem to be aware that that's its strong point, which means the features found in all the other racing games of the past year compose the meat of the game.

The career mode is so incredibly average, with some fairly unspectacular racing, that you'll almost immediately turn to the bonus section of the game. There, you'll find mini-events based on the game's extensive use of rag-doll physics. They're terribly simple, but also incredibly funny at times. There's something satisfying about launching a car's passenger through the windshield while the car is airborne, only to see the passenger get mercilessly pummeled by an object in the environment and then flop to the ground. Six events, including bowling and darts, use this premise, but it's just not enough, and some of the minigames aren't as good as others. *FlatOut* could've offered a dozen or so of these events and injected a little more variety in them and it would've been enough to stand on its own.

However, there just isn't enough here to hold your attention. If *FlatOut* had a little more depth—similar to that found in the *Demolition Derby* series—it might've been different, but you won't find such depth here. In fact, if you have the demo featured in *OPM*'s July issue [#94], that's pretty much all you need, unless you want to play the other bonus tracks really, really bad. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Great graphics, fun bonus tracks
CONS Career mode and mechanics are boring

Pub. Empire Interactive **Dev.** Bugbear **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING ●●◐○○

STA +27
2 Hits

COLOSSEUM: ROAD TO FREEDOM

AND A LONG ROAD IT IS

I like beating people up—just ask my three younger siblings, all of whom were my victims while we were growing up. But I would have picked a lot fewer fights if I were as clunky as my fighter in *Colosseum*.

You are a slave who must fight in regular exhibitions, slowly but surely paying off your debt to win your freedom. You'll follow a routine of fighting for money, training to increase your strength, and eating to upgrade your abilities. The end goal is to do well enough in your fights to earn enough money to become a free man.

Combat is kind of awkward—your character doesn't respond quickly, making it tough to dodge or execute fast attacks on an opponent. It's also tricky to pick up loot during battle: You have to be perfectly positioned at the correct angle, and the grasping mechanic doesn't always work. This means that if you lose a weapon during combat, cross your fingers and hope something has been dropped far enough away from the rest of your opponents that you'll have a few tries to pick it up. Perform well in fights, and the crowd will reward you with a higher payment than if you bore them.

Between bouts, you'll have the chance to train through minigames. These provide a nice break, and doing well earns you more upgrade points. Plus, one of the trainers, Celadus, has a peg leg, which is cool. (All developers, take note: Peg legs are *always* a good addition to a game.)

The biggest problem is that it all just gets kind of boring, which is rather criminal for a game that's about heated, bloody battles. For better toga-style skirmishing, try *Shadow of Rome*. « *Dana Jongewaard*

Drop
Back
Sell
Exy Tracian Galea
Blue Provocator
Sector Skull Galea
61
12/20
Raises your STA 8 points
When equipped
Permanent
Mars' Favor

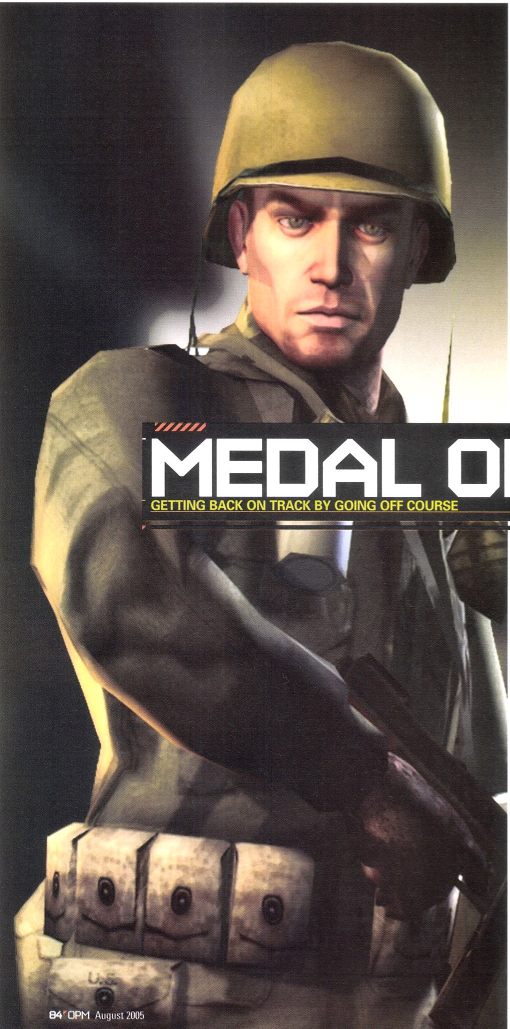
THUMBS UP Decent fighting, nice training mechanism, peg legs
THUMBS DOWN Awkward controls, boring

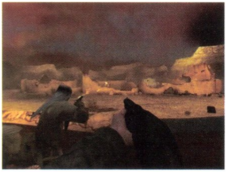
Pub. Koei **Dev.** Goshow **ESRB** M **MSRP** $39.99

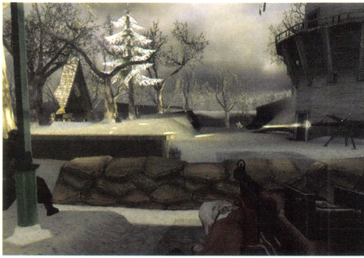
RATING ●●◐○○

DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT HISTORY

Ten minutes of research on Google could have shown the developers that one of the Roman gods you can choose to pay obeisance to in *Colosseum* is not actually a god. While Hercules was the son of Zeus, he was not a deity himself.







MEDAL OF HONOR:

GETTING BACK ON TRACK BY GOING OFF COURSE

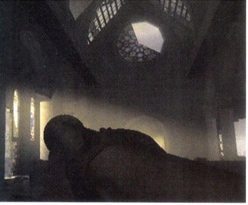
In one of Penny Arcade's sketches from this year's E3, Gabe announces that "Omaha Beach is the new Hoth," a reference to the funguslike spread of World War II shooters. There are just too damn many out there. What's ironic is that the *Medal of Honor* series—on whose shoulders the responsibility for this glut must be squarely placed—is itself falling victim to the syndrome. Look at a screenshot for *European Assault* or watch a short clip of the game and you'll be hard-pressed to distinguish it from the rest of the herd.

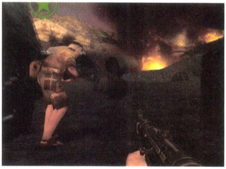
Thankfully, if you spend a few moments actually playing the game, you'll understand that this is a very different experience from previous *Medal of Honor*s and a pretty significant step forward for the series. In fact, *European Assault* reminds me most of a slightly lobotomized *SOCOM*. You've got similarly nonlinear level design, similarly precise and realistic weapons, and a similar chance of your character coming to a quick, brutal, and frequent end.

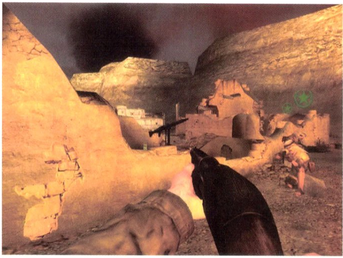
Yes, I said *non*linear. If you ever felt cramped by previous *Medal of Honor* games' ultralinear pathways, you'll love the wide-open feel of *European Assault*. (Well, you'll love it until about the ninth level, when you'll really start to miss those checkpoints. But more on that later.) The huge, detailed levels offer lots of room to explore, and good reason to: Exploring unlocks side missions, and completing side missions earns you extra lives, or "revives."

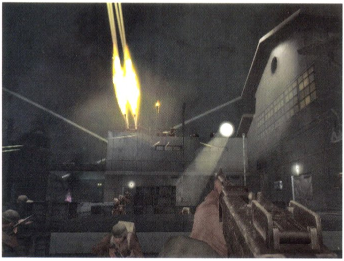
Now, there are still some scripted elements, which hurt the feeling of freedom a bit. You'll cross boundaries that magically alert enemies to your presence, for example, or spend time wandering an entire level looking for just the right trigger point to activate a side mission. Enemies will often run along their predetermined little paths, oblivious to your presence until they arrive at their destination (even if they end up literally walking through you). It's not a huge distraction, but it can be a little annoying when you can't seem to figure out what to do next...and then learn that you just hadn't entered the right area to trigger the next event.

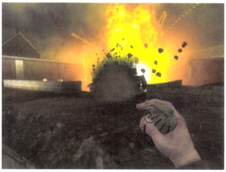
Overall, though, disposing of the artificial, tunnellike level structure has made the game feel much more realistic. This feeling is











EUROPEAN ASSAULT

only intensified by the fact that bullets now do very realistic damage. Unlike previous games, in which you play a sort of bullet-dodging übermensch, *European Assault* forces you to make very liberal use of cover. Run out into the open and you will be gunned down, in many cases almost instantly. The result is a much greater sense of tension as you crawl from cover to cover. Luckily, the designers implemented a very elegant method of shooting from cover: Just hide, aim with L1, then use the left analog stick to pop out in any direction; release the stick and you'll automatically revert back to your cover. It also helps that the hit detection system is gloriously precise; in most cases, if you can see just a sliver of an enemy's head next to a window frame or doorway, you can take him out. These two elements balance the vastly increased power and accuracy of enemies' weapons nicely, contributing to the realism.

Which makes it seem somewhat odd that the designers added some very arcadey elements. Consider the adrenaline meter, a bar that fills with each act of valor (blowing up a tank, for example, or getting off a head shot). When the bar is full, you can trigger a sort of berserker rage that renders you invincible and gives you unlimited ammo for a brief time. (If you're wondering, this isn't as useful as it sounds, since the accompanying blurring effect makes it really difficult to take out more than a few enemies unless they're standing very close together in a very open area.)

Or consider the new system of medkits and revives. Seems an odd choice for a shooter that's so true to life, especially given the system's frustrating quirks. See, revives are used automatically, but medkits aren't; you keep those in your inventory and use them voluntarily. This can lead to the unbelievably frustrating scenario of losing your last revive to a surprise attack even though you're fully stocked with medkits. Getting almost to the end of an hour-long level, dying, and getting sent all the way back to the beginning can be very, very, very infuriating.

In spite of this, though, I must applaud the game's finely tuned level of difficulty. Because even with this frustration I never felt like I had hit a wall; each time I went into a level I felt a little more in control, a little better informed. I knew I could do better, and I almost always did. (The exception to this was the second-to-last level, which is a complete and total bitch no matter how you slice it.)

The one area in which the game falls completely flat, though, is its attempt at squad combat. Being able to order a group of teammates around is fine if there's a real benefit, but most of the time there isn't. Your squadmates tend to be pretty awful shots and aren't terribly perceptive. Here's an example: I'd set myself up at a window to snipe enemies below, with two mates at my back. While waiting for some guy downstairs to pop his head up, I suddenly noticed I was being shot at from behind. I turned around to discover three enemies had climbed up to my snipe spot, and my teammates were just standing around looking faintly bored. Er, hello? Guys? Little help here?

Also somewhat perplexing is the complete absence of any online component. Oh, there's splitscreen if you're really desperate to get your multiplayer on, but come on, EA—please join us here in the 21st century and put those impressive skills to work coming up with interesting online modes.

Ultimately, *European Assault* is another World War II shooter and falls back on many of the familiar formulas of the genre. But the nonlinear design, careful difficulty ramp, and outstanding presentation bring this one above the pack. And hey, at least it doesn't have an Omaha Beach level. « *Joe Rybicki*

PROS New nonlinear structure, more realistic weapons, elegant cover system

CONS Scripted elements are jarring, squad features are virtually useless, occasional nasty slowdown, no online play

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA LA **ESRB** T **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [●●●●○]

GETTING PERSONAL

Each level of *European Assault* features a German "nemesis"—a specific character whose death is one of your optional objectives. Sort of like a midlevel boss, these guys are fast, brutal, and very tough to kill. But you will want to seek them out (along with all the other optional objectives), because only by completing all of a mission's objectives will you earn a gold ranking. And a gold ranking gives you an automatic extra life on the next level—a very big bonus.

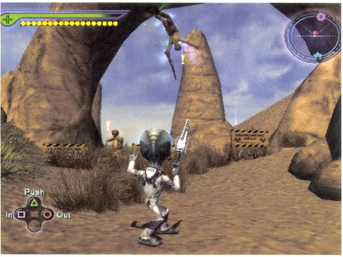
DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

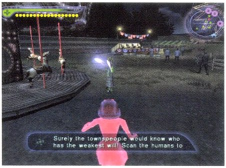
I TURNED INTO A FURON

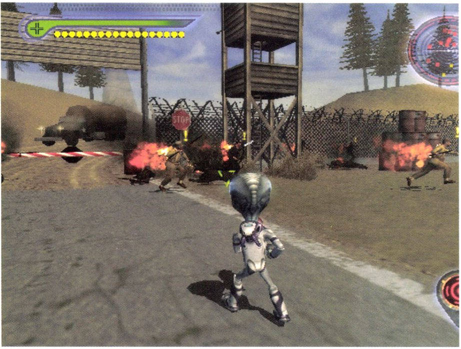
What an awesome idea: a sandbox-style game with a '50s sci-fi B-movie theme—and you're the alien invader! Anal probes, brain harvesting, and men in black (the Majestic) abound. The game is rife with references to the great alien conspiracy theories of the past 50 years, including Roswell, Area 51, and tinfoil hats. The atmosphere is perfect, from the campy dialogue to the eerie theremin tones that suffuse all the music in the game. The whole theme just works so well.

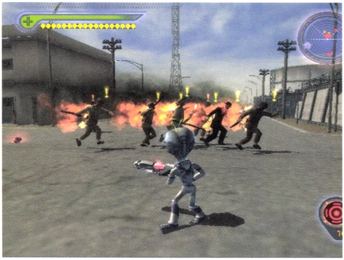
Which makes it even more of a damned shame that the gameplay doesn't. The biggest issue is the fact that you're led by the nose through every single tiny step of the story. Here's an example drawn straight from the game. From the mother ship, you head down to Capitol City. While your saucer lands, you get a short briefing. Once the level's finished loading, you see a pink column stretching up into the sky about 50 feet in front of you and words akin to "Go to the capitol steps" appear onscreen. So you walk forward into the column to watch a fairly short cinema. Once that ends, you're looking at another pink column targeting your saucer. "Return to your saucer" appears onscreen. Remember, these two things are something like 50 feet apart—easily within the view distance on both sides. This is the kind of excruciating hand-holding that goes on throughout the entire game.

This would, perhaps, not be so obnoxious if it weren't for the fact that the game is very clumsily put together. Far from the wide-open, do-anything, *GTA*-style gameplay impressions you might get from screenshots, *Destroy All Humans!* is actually fairly restrictive. True, you can switch between flying your saucer around and running around on foot (well, on foot plus jetpack). But you can do so only at certain specified landing spots—and the transition between the two takes so long as to be truly obnoxious. It makes you not want to bother with the saucer unless you absolutely have to (and most of the time you don't).




Surely the townspeople would know who has the weakest will! Scan the humans to





The end result is that instead of the feeling of freedom found in a really good sandbox game, *Destroy All Humans!* generates a feeling of, well, boredom. You're walked mercilessly through the main story in baby steps, and side missions are infrequent and uninspired. The destructible environments offer a novel interlude...until you realize that every building is going to fall down in exactly the same fashion and you get tired of the respawning tanks, SAMs, and antiaircraft guns shooting at you. Exploring the levels with (lead alien) Crypto's jetpack is marginally more interesting (in a sort of serene, *Pilotwings* way), but aside from hunting down the game's one collectible item, there's not much reason to return to areas once you've completed the story missions. And with only six levels, the game just doesn't offer enough variety.

All that said, though, there's lots to like about *Destroy All Humans*. For one thing, it looks great—well, except for the scenery popping in all over the place and the ridiculous slowdown when more than a handful of enemies are onscreen. Aside from that, it looks beautiful, seriously. The fact that the game actually attempts some social satire is, I think, also worth noting. It's not exactly the most deft or subtle humor, but the portrayals of the military, the U.S. government, and both groups' response to the alien invasion are pretty funny. And there's that great, great '50s style that permeates everything. It's just too bad there's not enough of a game to hold it all together. « *Joe Rybicki*

PROS Great '50s style, gorgeous look, some actual social satire
CONS Fairly boring overall, clumsily put together, surprisingly restrictive

Pub. THQ **Dev.** Pandemic/Mass Media **ESRB** M **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●●○○]

FREEDOM NOW

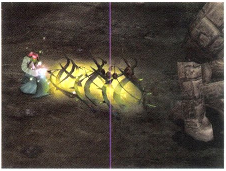
To get an idea of how seriously *Destroy All Humans*' structure affects the feeling of freedom, consider the following: Imagine playing *GTA3*, only instead of having the ultimate goal of your mission displayed as an icon on your map, you would get updates every block: "Walk down this block." "Turn right." "Enter this building." "Walk back to your car." And you'd be able to enter or exit a car in only one spot in each neighborhood, and if you left your car in a garage and then walked all the way across town, you'd have to walk all the way back to be able to drive again. And anytime you died or finished a mission you'd get sent to the Main menu, where you would wait while the game loaded you into the exact same place you just left. Oh, and you couldn't actually drive or walk from one end of the map to the other; you'd have to go back to the Main menu to switch neighborhoods. If all this sounds like fun, have I got a game for you!

ARC THE LAD: END OF DARKNESS

TRADITIONS ARE MADE TO BE BROKEN

234 / 500
3:39
Sherlock
DeuceEnder
Spear
Strawberry
CrossedOut
Altold

452 / 500
Sherlock
Strawberry
Spear
DeuceEnder



If my own little personal fairy godmother dropped down from the sky right now and asked me to make a wish, I would wish that the convention of having to trigger events through random conversations with random townsfolk would curl up in a corner and die. If I have been specifically sent in search of a person, there is absolutely no reason I should have to run around town engaging strangers in conversation in order to make the person I have been sent in search of available to me.

I also should not have to sit through lengthy written conversations extolling the virtues of my protagonist. It would be one thing if the text automatically scrolled and I could just play my PSP while waiting for the action to start, but having to pay attention so I can hit X to scroll past the dialogue gets really old. It's not a sign of good gameplay—or of any play at all—when you spend as much time with the X button getting past conversations as you do in combat.

Remove those two aspects of the game and *Arc the Lad* would be getting straight Cs. Everything is passable—no aspects of the game are missing, nothing's technically wrong. It's just that it doesn't strive above any of the old, established conventions of the genre. It has an average overwrought RPG story line, average graphics, and an average (to poor) combat system that has shifted from turn-based combat to real-time combat. So if you're an *Arc the Lad* fan who kept wishing for real-time action, you'll love it no matter what I say, and the rest of you won't care.

The whole time I was playing, I kept hearing the voice of ye olde-time gamer in my head saying, "When I was a boy, we used to have to walk five miles uphill in the snow to play RPGs! And we liked it!" You might have liked it then, but continuing to long for those crusty game conventions of yore is like saying you miss taking your covered wagon to move your possessions instead of using the pesky modern convenience of a U-Haul. « *Dana Jongewaard*

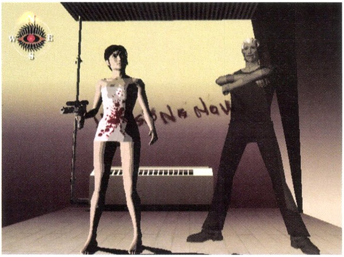
VERDICT OK for old-school RPG fans who like *Arc the Lad*, but good lord, can we move on already?

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Cattle Call **ESRB** T **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●○○○]

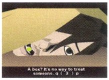
KILLER 7

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?



YOU ARE ONE UGLY DUDE

Some characters in *Killer 7* give you a bunch of hints, so it's always a good idea to talk to secondary characters when you encounter them. Some characters, like Travis and the ever-present carrier pigeon, will help you understand parts of the story as well, so listen up.



Why is there a disembodied head on a bookshelf talking to me? Why is the guy in the luchador mask flipping me off? What the hell is going on? These are just a few of the many questions I had while playing *Killer 7*, a game with an insane amount of style and generous chunks of absurdity—so many, in fact, that they often mask *Killer 7*'s major flaws. Basically, the game amounts to a weak PC-style adventure game with rudimentary puzzles mixed with clumsy first-person shooting mechanics.

It's not a complete disaster by any means. The game still has some pretty cool elements, but unfortunately, they sometimes get ignored. *Killer 7* really doesn't take advantage of the individual powers of the Smiths (the team of assassins featured in the game). All the Smiths are different enough that there's a benefit to switching between them, but for a good portion of the game, you're basically fine with sticking with Dan Smith, a character who has good shooting skills and enough health to withstand an attack from the enemies in the game.

Those freakish enemies *do* present quite a challenge. Later in the game, you encounter different types of foes that can't be killed with a simple hailstorm of bullets—you have to be precise and observant at all times or they'll get the jump on you within seconds. However, there are multiple instances when you simply can't run away from enemies because of the game's lame navigation system. Your character is always on rails and stops when you arrive at a junction or when you're near a special object in the environment. Imagine a person with ADD trying to run away from an exploding bomb. Yes, it's that irritating.

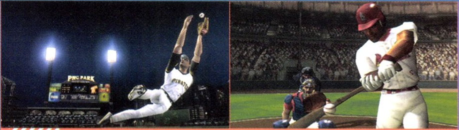
Solving puzzles, while not as much of an ordeal, is still trying. It's not that the puzzles are difficult, but rather that they're all pretty similar. In a way, though, it's probably good that the puzzles are so straightforward: If you had to constantly run around and backtrack through rooms while enduring the long loading times between locations, there would be ample reason to shut off the PS2 and snap the game in half.

Ultimately, it's the style and absurdity that make *Killer 7* bearable. You're almost willing to deal with terrible loading times, poor puzzles, and weak shooting mechanics just to see what kind of madness will happen next. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Awesome style, crazy story
CONS Weak puzzles and action, long load times

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Grasshopper Manufacture **ESRB** M **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [●●◐○○]



MVP BASEBALL

SACRIFICE FLY

Much like the rest of EA's PSP lineup, *MVP Baseball* is a castrated version of its console counterpart. While the main gameplay mechanics found in the PS2 version of *MVP Baseball* can be found in the PSP version, many of the more in-depth features, such as a full franchise mode, are absent.

A full franchise mode is not necessarily practical in a portable game like this. Such modes require a lot more attention than standard season options, and that might not be well suited for this type of on-the-go experience. Still, it's what baseball fans want—the regular season mode doesn't get the job done with the limited number of options it offers.

On the other hand, the gameplay is pretty good. The pitching is executed particularly well, with a huge assortment of pitches at your disposal, depending on the skill of the pitcher. The batting can be tricky at times due to the simple fact that it's really difficult to see the ball. Combine this with trying to nail down the timing of your swing, and it may be a few games before you can really get a good feel for hitting. The fielding feels a little sluggish, even when you're just trying to run someone down between bases or get into position to catch a fly, but throwing is responsive, so you should have no problem picking players off.

MVP Baseball is good if you want a quick baseball fix, but there's so much room for improvement we're hoping that EA is saving most of the good stuff for next year's version. *« Giancarlo Varanini*

PROS Sound, detailed players and stadiums
CONS Lacking in extra features, batting and fielding need a little extra work

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** E **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [○○○●●]

PAR
Manual rec
Replay
Next
Total +1
PAR4
420y
1
+0
1st Stroke
258y
Remaining
398y
1W
258y
100%
50%
0%
8
98~100%
?m

HOT SHOTS GOLF: OPEN TEE

SURPRISE! NOT JUST THE SAME OLD, SAME OLD

It's easy to understand why *Hot Shots* has enjoyed such a long history of success: It's simple enough for anyone to pick up and play, but complex enough for anyone who wants to really dig into it. *Open Tee* is no exception, using a simple, intuitive interface to disguise a game of surprising depth.

It seems that the "same old, same old" complaints about the previous two *Hot Shots* installments were taken to heart here. While *Open Tee* at first looks and feels exactly like any other *Hot Shots* game, you'll discover subtle nuances that help make this a fairly new experience. Some new, special shots, for example, require more button-jockeying than the standard tap-tap-tap shot.

The quest for unlockable items has also been revamped. The store has been closed; new outfits and such can now be gained only by winning specific tournaments or challenges. And you open up new courses only by increasing your overall rank. Given the choice, I prefer the store, but it's not a deal-breaker. Alas, the unlockable items are every bit as goofy as in previous *Hot Shots*. Lollipop clubs! X-ray glasses! An Elvis pompadour! Please.

In spite of this, ah, lightheartedness, progression through the game is slow. You'll slog and plod and trudge through the same damn courses over and over while you slowly open up new courses and characters, which can get a bit wearisome. All things considered, though, the fundamental game is exceptionally solid—and a step in the right direction for the series. *« Joe Rybicki*

PROS New special shots; new unlockable structure; hey man, it's portable!
CONS Same goofy style, limited content

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Clap Hanz **ESRB** E **MSRP** $39.99

RATING [○○○○●]

Lightning ver.1
57/55

CODED ARMS

RANDOM DOESN'T HACK IT

***"Coded Arms* will** be SOOOO tight.

"OMG, an FPS for PSP! I heard it's gonna be tighter than *Halo 2*, *Doom 3*, and *Half-Life 2* combined! Thirty weapons! And the levels are random, so it's never gonna get old! PSP 4 life!

"When the battery drains, the screen goes dark, like my haunted soul." —PSPoet

I hate to be the bearer of bad news, PSPoet (and I hope it doesn't send you into another poetic depression), but *Coded Arms* is nothing like the modern games you mentioned. See, before the genre began devouring everything in its path—survival-horror in *Doom 3*, cinematic storytelling in *Half-Life*, adventure in *Metroid Prime*, and so on—first-person shooters didn't stray too far from...shooting. Levels were cramped and boxy. Enemies were brain dead. You had your fun just blowing through ammo. If that sounds "tight" to you, then maybe you'll dig *Coded Arms*.

So you saw the pretty little glowing effect in the screenshots, and your imagination got the best of you. *Coded Arms* is nothing but an old-school shooter covered in a thin layer of modern gloss. The enemies aren't very spry (or smart), so the lack of fine aiming control (no second nub on the PSP) isn't an issue. They tend to hover around in corners, waiting for you to come into range. Turn off the heavy-handed autoaim and play the real game.

The randomized levels do little to vary the experience. No matter how you stick rooms and hallways together, they tend to play the same. And variety is no substitute for decent level design. You often find yourself trekking into dead ends, riding elevators that go nowhere special, and praying for power-ups after they randomly dry up.

The only thing saving *Coded Arms* from complete failure is its steady RPG-style upgrading, which gives you some motivation, however thin, to continue. The whole game smells like laziness. *« Robert Ashley*

VERDICT Shallow combat meets nonexistent level design in a battle for FPS mediocrity.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami Studios **ESRB** M **MSRP** $49.99

RATING [○○●●●]

RENGOKU RETURNS

Coded Arms is set up, somewhat suspiciously, just like Konami's megadud *Rengoku*, with randomized levels and ad-hoc multiplayer. Thankfully, it's nowhere near as bad.

MILLION DOLLAR BABY

(Hilary Swank, Clint Eastwood)

EASY STREET DOESN'T ALWAYS PAY by John Scalzi

That sneaky Clint Eastwood. All the early money was on Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator* to sweep the Oscars, and then Eastwood said, "Oh yeah, I've got a little film over here you might want to look at." And that was it for *The Aviator.* But note this well: *Million Dollar Baby* got what it deserved. At an age when most film directors have gone off to the old directors' home, Eastwood is tackling hard moral conundrums in film and giving these questions the genuine respect they deserve.

Eastwood plays a washed-up boxing manager who is railroaded into training a woman boxer (Hilary Swank) by the boxer and by his closest friend (Morgan Freeman). Train her he does, and everything goes as it should...until it doesn't. The plot twist in this film has been chewed over in the media quite a bit, and yet I still won't reveal it here. But I will say that I find it amusing that Clint Eastwood found himself castigated by the same hard-right people who made him their poster boy in his *Dirty Harry* days. I don't think Eastwood's atoning for those days; my guess is that as an artist he feels he's earned the right to note there are no simple answers. He's right that he's earned that right, and he's right about the answers, too.

Indeed, what *Million Dollar Baby* shares with Eastwood's other Oscar winner, *Unforgiven*, is just this recognition of the slippery nature of what's right. In Eastwood's films, the best characters note that everything comes with a hard price, and they wonder if they have what it takes to pay that price in full. In a world like ours, where people of all political and moral stripes are pushing black and white views of the world, Eastwood's essays in gray seem very nearly courageous. Good for him for making these sorts of films, and good for the Academy for rewarding him for making them.

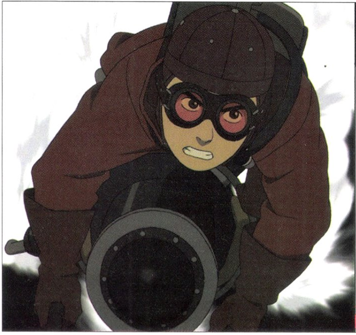
RATING [●●●●●]

CONSTANTINE

(Keanu Reeves, Rachel Weisz)

This theologically muddled bit of special-effects silliness is more tolerable if you don't know that it's based on the excellent *Hellraiser* comic book series, in which Constantine is a blond Englishman rather than, you know, Keanu Reeves. If you do know this, there are exactly two reasons to recommend it: Tilda Swinton slumming it as the archangel Gabriel and all the special-effect-ridden demons you can eat. If you don't know about the comics, it *might* be possible to enjoy Keanu, too....

RATING [○○●●●]



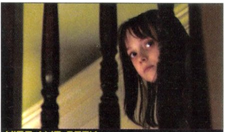
STEAMBOY

(Alfred Molina, Anna Paquin)

First the good news: In all your geeky steampunk dreams, you never imagined an alternate Victorian England as gloriously gorgeous as Katsuhiro Otomo has in *Steamboy*. Otomo, who made the seminal anime film *Akira*, spent 10 years on this film, slaving over all the steamy visual details that make it a genuine treat to look at. You will drool, or at least you should. It. Just. Looks. Great.

As for the plot: eh. You can't have everything. Like many a gorgeous film, all the effort went into the visuals and hardly any into the story, which revolves around a boy who's torn between his good, forward-thinking grandfather and his not-so-nice, weapons-building dad. You wouldn't miss much by turning down the sound. But you will miss a lot if you never see this film. Your eyes deserve a treat.

RATING [○○○◐●]

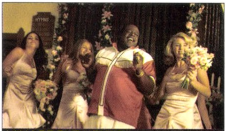


HIDE AND SEEK

(Robert De Niro, Dakota Fanning)

There is a horrifying fascination in watching one of the greatest actors of our generation hit late middle age, look around, shrug, and start taking on truly crappy film roles for the money. Robert De Niro hasn't been in a good movie since 1997's *Jackie Brown* and isn't helping his batting record with this lame thriller, the twist of which you can see from six miles off. Even Dakota Fanning (as his weirded-out daughter) does a better job. For God's sake, Martin Scorsese! Schedule an intervention!

RATING [○○●●●]



MAN OF THE HOUSE

(Tommy Lee Jones, Anne Archer)

Teaming up Tommy Lee Jones with a bunch of cheerleaders in a sorority house sounds like a tabloid editor's wet dream, or at the very least a product placement for Cialis. But in this case, it's just a rather blah attempt at a comedy in which Jones is a Texas Ranger assigned to keep safe a group of murder witnesses who happen to be hot college cheerleaders, or something like that. It's not good, but it's better than it should be, almost entirely on the strength of Jones' hangdog deadpan.

RATING [○○◐●●]

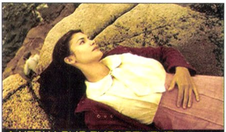
DVD RELEASES

July 5
- Hide and Seek
- Prozac Nation

July 12
- Bill and Ted's Most Excellent Collection
- Million Dollar Baby
- A Very Long Engagement

July 19
- Constantine
- Ice Princess
- Man of the House

July 26
- Steamboy
- The Upside of Anger
- XXX: State of the Union



A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT

(Audrey Tautou, Dominique Pinon)

Actress Audrey Tautou and director Jean-Pierre Jeunet teamed up a couple of years ago on the absolutely delightful and sunny *Amélie*. This film is not nearly so sunny—it involves a woman's search for her soldier fiancé in the wake of World War I—and it's not as obviously magical as that film. But it's richer, deeper, and in many ways more human, a fairy tale that doesn't avoid the fact that prior to Walt Disney, fairy tales could get very dark indeed.

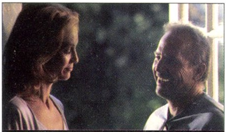
RATING [○○○○●]

ICE PRINCESS

(Michelle Trachtenberg, Kim Cattrall)

IMDb assures me that Michelle Trachtenberg is 20 years old, and yet she projects such an air of dazed teenage gawkiness in this film that I feel I should be cuffed with a sex offender GPS anklet just for looking at her. It's not really her, or me, for that matter (honest)—it's just that this film about a geek-turned-ice-skater is so laser-targeted for 10- to 12-year-old girls that anyone not in that age group feels desperately out of place with the film's concerns and plot. Or should, anyway.

RATING [○○○●●]



THE UPSIDE OF ANGER

(Joan Allen, Kevin Costner)

It's probably too late for Kevin Costner to be revived as a box office draw, and that's good, because it frees him up to do what he does best: play slightly disreputable characters who land between supporting role and leading actor. Here he is a retired baseball player who takes a shine to an embittered neighbor (Joan Allen) whose husband just ditched her. They become drinking buddies and then something more, and it's all handled in a smart way that reminds you Costner can act when pressed.

RATING [○○○○●]

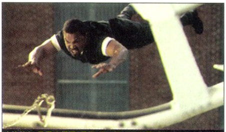
UMD RELEASES

July 5
- Dodgeball
- Napoleon Dynamite

July 12
- Black Hawk Down
- You Got Served

July 19
- Gone in 60 Seconds
- Kill Bill Vol. 2
- Man of the House

July 26
- The Fast and the Furious
- Monty Python and the Holy Grail
- Steamboy



XXX: STATE OF THE UNION

(Ice Cube, Samuel L. Jackson)

Bang bang Ice Cube bang bang bang bang. Samuel L. Jackson, your makeup is not convincing bang bang boom boom boom bang. Willem Dafoe, stop playing villains boom bang bang boom boom bang boom. There's a plot here? Guess not boom bang bang boom bang BOOM bang bang BOOM. Bang bang Vin Diesel wasn't wrong to ditch bang bang bang bang bang although I feel bad for Ice Cube boom boom BOOM boom bang. Oh, yeah: bang bang bang bang BANG. There, I'm done.

RATING [○○●●●]

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REPLAY

94>

GTA

FIRST CAME THE BEST, THEN CAME THE REST

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TRENDSETTER

GRAND THEFT AUTO

IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING FIRST—IT'S ABOUT BEING BEST

When *Grand Theft Auto III* burst onto the scene in 2001, it was hailed as a fresh, new thing. But the truth is that the people behind *GTA* weren't pioneers of game development. Instead, they were perfectionists, refining game components and combining them into the ideal mix. Their success, of course, ensured that a number of other developers would copy them in hopes of reaping the same financial rewards. May we present our look at what *GTA* begot.

2003

THE OPEN ROAD

Invisible boundaries have maddened gamers for decades now, leaving game developers with the daunting task of trying to provide open, interactive worlds. Since *GTA*, more studios have attempted the same.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

The best *Simpsons* game ever took the *GTA* formula and coated with a Springfield skin. Instead of running errands for your crime family, you'll find yourself chauffering Comic Book Guy and rounding up monkeys for Dr. Nick to conduct his experiments on. It's good fun all around.

THE GETAWAY

Developer Team Soho took the challenge of mapping out the city of London; the end result managed to satisfy our very British reviewer. Sadly, the series took a turn for the worse with the sequel. It seems that realistically mapped cities can't quite make up for crappy game design.

BAD BEHAVIOR

Nothing pushes the envelope like letting game characters do things that rile up teachers, parents, and politicians. After all, if the game is scandalous enough, you might even get some free publicity on the morning talk show circuit!

DEF JAM VENDETTA

Underground street fighting is rebellious, but even more rebellious is underground street fighting as a real live rapper. EA not only offered plenty of bad behavior opportunities, but also provided an alternative for those who prefer their fighting games to be free of leotard-clad men.

MANHUNT

Rockstar took the violence a step further with *Manhunt*, in which each execution is showcased within its own little snuff film. (The ESRB members must have shut their eyes when rating this M.) However, the violence ends up dragging down what is otherwise a decent game.

STAR POWER

Though celebrity voice actors were around well before this millennium (most notably in games from the dismal FMV trend of the late '90s), *GTA3* really helped popularize the use of film stars as voice actors in non-movie-licensed products. In some cases, it was the only positive thing about the game.

TRUE CRIME

Once you get past the fact that you're an undercover cop fighting dragons in a game called "*True* Crime," you might notice that Activision hired a whole roster of celebs, including Snoop, Gary Oldman, and Christopher Walken. Sadly, their presence was a crime in itself.

2004

SPIDER-MAN 2

Webslinging through New York and picking up random side missions is so awesome that it actually overshadows the game's main missions (which in contrast seem even shorter and simpler than they normally would) and erratic boss fights.

MAFIA

Look, kids! It's *GTA*, History Channel style! This PC port offers a good story line and interesting missions, letting you rob banks, blow up buildings, and assist in bootlegging fun. Sadly, it gets bogged down by jaggy graphics, awkward controls, and lengthy load times.

RISE TO HONOR

We are graced with Jet Li's voice and likeness here, which might lead you to believe that you get to be an awesome, high-kicking action star. Sadly, you are just a mediocre action star, thanks to an erratic control scheme and bosses whose difficulty levels are all over the map.

ONIMUSHA 3

It seems that Capcom thought that some celebrity involvement might boost sales, so the company hired French actor Jean Reno to lend his voice and likeness to Jacques. Jean's speaking part is only half an hour, after which it switches to an English actor. But the game's still good.

DRIV3R

Atari lined up a movie-worthy cast for this entry in the *Driver* series, enlisting Michael Madsen, Ving Rhames, and Michelle Rodriguez. Given the flat, phoning-it-in performances, however, we're thinking that even if Atari paid them in Taco Bell coupons, it was too much.

THE BARD'S TALE

Nothing suits a saucy bard like a saucy British voice, which is probably why Traveller's Tales hired Cary Elwes. Native Brits might complain that Mr. Elwes' Cockney accent isn't exactly accurate, but fortunately, clever dialogue makes the few people who could tell that not care.

2005

MERCENARIES

Yay for doing it your way! Pandemic actually incorporated an open-ended design into *Mercenaries'* playing structure. You can not only go where you want, but also use that freedom to finish each of the missions a number of different ways. Huzzah!

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

It seems that Pandemic forgot what was awesome about *Mercenaries* when it made this game. Yes, there are wide-open environments, but what good are they when missions treat you like an idiot, leading you through every segment without giving you a chance to figure it out?

PLAYBOY: THE MANSION

Hugh Hefner was once America's poster child for bad behavior, with an endless parade of naked women traipsing into his bed. But that was more than 50 years ago, and now, even a hefty dose of Viagra can't help digital Hugh and his game rise above this tepid *Sims*-clone design.

NARC

Everyone knows that drugs are bad, and playing a cop who takes drugs is *really* bad. Please, however, whatever you do, don't buy into this game's marketing spiel—no matter how horrible your behavior, this game is still worse than you can ever be.

AREA 51

It sounds like the start of a joke ("David Duchovny and Marilyn Manson walk into a game recording studio...."), but it wasn't...quite. The duo's performances aren't bad, but when you consider the amount of money they likely got paid, you realize Midway didn't get the best deal.

REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in black bars indicate a Greatest Hits title. Names in red indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡ indicates the game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
PSP			
Ape Escape: On the Loose	Sony CEA	●●●	93
Archer Maclean's Mercury	Ignition	●●●◖	94
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	Sony CEA	●●●	94
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	●●●	93
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	●●●	92
FIFA Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●	94
Gretzky NHL	Sony CEA	●●●◖	93
Lumines	Ubisoft	●●●●	92
Metal Gear Acid	Konami	●●●●	92
MLB	Sony CEA	●●●◖	94
NBA	Sony CEA	●●◖	93
NBA Street Showdown	EA Sports Big	●●●	94
Need for Speed Underground Rivals	EA Games	●●●◖	92
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	EA Sports Big	●●●	93
Rengoku: The Tower of Purgatory	Konami	●	93
Ridge Racer	Namco	●●●●	92
Smart Bomb	Eidos	●◖	93
Spider-Man 2	Activision	●●●◖	93
Tiger Woods PGA Tour	EA Sports	●●●●	93
Tony Hawk's Underground 2: Remix	Activision	●●●●	93
Twisted Metal: Head-On	Sony CEA	●●●●	93
Untold Legends: Brotherhood...	Sony Online Ent.	●●●	92
Wipeout Pure	Sony CEA	●●●●	93
World Tour Soccer	Sony CEA	●●●	93
PS2			
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●◖	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**51**
Ace Combat 5: The Unsung War	Namco	●●●●	87
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◖	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◖	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Alias	Acclaim	●●◖	81
Alien Hominid	0-3 Entertainment	●●●●	88
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◖	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◖	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◖	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◖	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◖	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	70
Ape Escape: Primed & Pumped	Ubisoft	●●◖	88
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
⚡Area 51	Midway	●●●●	90
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◖	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◖	61
Armored Core: Nexus	Agetec	●●	85
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◖	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◖	45
Asterix & Obelix Kick Buttix	Atari	●●◖	85
Astro Boy	Sega	●●●	85
Atari Anthology	Atari	●●	89
Atelier Iris: Eternal Mana	NIS America	●●●◖	94
Athens 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	83
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**42**
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**64**
⚡ATV Offroad Fury 3	Sony CEA	●●●●	88
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◖	69
Backyard Baseball	Atari	●●◖	81
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◖	75
Backyard Wrestling 2: There Goes the Neighborhood	Eidos	●◖	89
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	**Interplay**	●●●●◖	**52**
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◖	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
The Bard's Tale	Vivendi Universal	●●●●◖	86
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◖	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Assault 3	Bandai	●●◖	88
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◖	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◖	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◖	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◖	63
BloodRayne 2	Majesco	●●●●◖	87
Blood Will Tell	Sega	●●●●	87
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◖	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◖	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◖	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
⚡Brothers in Arms: Road to Hill 30	Ubisoft	●●●	92
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◖	73
Bujingai: The Forsaken City	Bam	●●●●	82
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◖	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63
⚡Burnout 3: Takedown	**EA Games**	●●●●●	**85**
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	**Activision**	●●◖	**67**
Cabela's Big Game Hunter 2005 Adv.	Activision	●●●	90
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	**Activision**	●●◖	**76**
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◖	74
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2005 Season	Activision	●●●●◖	85
⚡Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Activision	●●●●	89
Capcom Fighting Evolution	Capcom	●◖	88
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◖	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◖	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
Catwoman	EA Games	●	84
⚡Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	**Sony Online**	●●●●◖	**78**
⚡Champions: Return to Arms	Sony Online	●●●●◖	90
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◖	70
⚡Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◖	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
ChoroQ	Atlus	●●●◖	86
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Cold Fear	Ubisoft	●●●	92
Cold Winter	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	93
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	●●●●●	**68**
Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Acclaim	●●●	83
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	**Gotham Games**	●◖	**63**
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict: Vietnam	Global Star	●●◖	86
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Constantine	THQ	●●●	92
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◖	64
Corvette	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	●●●◖	**51**
⚡Crash 'N' Burn	Eidos	●●	87
Crash Nitro Kart	**Vivendi Universal**	●●●◖	**76**
Crash Twinsanity	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	86
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	●●●●	**46**
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◖	80
Crimson Tears	Capcom	●●●◖	83
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◖	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◖	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	●●●●◖	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◖	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	●●●◖	**50**
DDR Extreme	Konami	●●●●	85
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◖	39
Dead to Rights	**Namco**	●●●	**65**
Dead to Rights II	Namco	●●	94
Death by Degrees	Namco	●◖	90
Def Jam Vendetta	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●	**67**
Def Jam Fight for NY	EA Games	●●●●◖	85
Defender	Midway	●●●◖	62
⚡Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◖	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◖	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	●●●●●	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	**Capcom**	●●●	**66**
Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening	Capcom	●●●●◖	91
Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai	●●●	88
Digimon World 4	Bandai	●●	94
Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◖	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◖	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◖	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◖	64
A Dog's Life	Hip Interactive	●●	84
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◖	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◖	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	**Atari**	●●●◖	**65**
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	**Atari**	●●◖	**76**
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 3	Atari	●●●●	88
Dragon Ball Z: Sagas	Atari	●●◖	93
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◖	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78
DRIV3R	Atari	●●●◖	83
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◖	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◖	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Duel Masters	Atari	●●●	89
The Dukes of Hazzard: Return of the General Lee	Ubisoft	●●●◖	87
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	**Koei**	●●●●	**85**
Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Dynasty Warriors 5	Koei	●●●◖	92
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56

HACK, SLASH, REPEAT

If you enjoy the action-RPG stylings of games like *The Bard's Tale* or *Champions of Norrath*, we certainly hope you've played *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*. This entertaining dungeon brawler was the first such game on PS2.

TOO REAL FOR SUCCESS

Driving Emotion Type-S was one of the first racing games on PS2. It looked absolutely stunning (especially the painstakingly modeled car interiors), but it was nearly impossible to play due to its absolutely grueling realism.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Echo Night: Beyond	Agetec	●●●	84
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡eJay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	**Atari**	**●●●**	**71**
Enthusia Professional Racing	Konami	●●◖	93
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	**●●●●●**	**46**
⚡ESPN College Hoops	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	76
⚡ESPN College Hoops 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	88
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ESPN Major League Baseball	ESPN Videogames	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ESPN NBA 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●	87
ESPN NBA Basketball	**ESPN Videogames**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡ESPN NFL Football	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	72
⚡ESPN NFL 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●	84
⚡ESPN NHL Hockey	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	73
⚡ESPN NHL 2K5	ESPN Videogames	●●●●◖	85
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◖	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◖	66
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◖	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◖	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◖	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: AntiGrav	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	87
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	80
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◖	41
Fairly OddParents: Shadow Showdown	THQ	●●●◖	88
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◖	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◖	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**63**
FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
FIFA Soccer 2005	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**86**
⚡FIFA Street	EA Sports	●●◖	91
Fight Club	Vivendi Universal	●◖	87
⚡Fight Night 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●**	**80**
⚡Fight Night Round 2	EA Sports	●●●●◖	91
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◖	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**●●●●●**	**53**
Final Fantasy X-2	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**78**
⚡Final Fantasy XI: Chains of Promathia	Square Enix USA	●●●●	87
Finding Nemo	**THQ**	**●●●◖**	**71**
Finny the Fish and the Seven Waters	Natsume	●●	91
Fireblade	Midway	●●◖	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◖	76
Ford Racing 3	2K Games	●●●	94
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◖	53
Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone	Atari	●●●◖	86
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◖	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**73**
Freekstyle	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●**	**59**
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◖	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◖	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◖	76
Front Mission 4	Square Enix	●●●●	82
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76
⚡Full Spectrum Warrior	THQ	●●●●	93
Fullmetal Alchemist	Square Enix	●●●	89
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	72
Future Tactics: The Uprising	Crave	●●●◖	81
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◖	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◖	50
Galactic Wrestling Featuring Ultimate Muscle	Bandai	●●◖	82
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◖	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gallop Racer 2004	Tecmo	●●●●	85
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◖	46
The Getaway	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●**	**66**
The Getaway: Black Monday	Sony CEA	●●	89
Get on da Mic	Eidos	●●	87
Ghosthunter	Namco	●●◖	84
Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex	Bandai	●●	87
⚡Ghost Recon 2	Ubisoft	●●●	89
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
God of War	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**92**
GoDai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Godzilla: Save the Earth	Atari	●●◖	88
⚡GoldenEye: Rogue Agent	EA Games	●●●	89
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gradius V	Konami	●●●◖	85
Graffiti Kingdom	Hot-B	●●●●	93
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**46**
Gran Turismo 4	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**91**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**52**
Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**87**
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**63**
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
⚡Gretzky NHL 2005	Sony CEA	●●◖	88
⚡Growlanser Generations	Working Designs	●●●●	88
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear Isuka	Sammy	●●●●	86
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungrave: Overdose	Mastiff	●●●◖	86
GunGriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
The Guy Game	Gathering	●	85
Half-Life	**Sierra**	**●●●●●**	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	**EA Games**	**●●●**	**75**
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	**EA Games**	**●●●◖**	**64**
Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	EA Games	●●●●	82
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haunting Ground	Capcom	●●◖	93
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Headhunter: Redemption	Sega	●●●	86
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	**●●●●●**	**67**
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	●●●●◖	81
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	**Eidos**	**●●●●◖**	**63**
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●**	**55**
⚡Hot Shots Golf Fore!	Sony CEA	●●●◖	85
⚡Hot Wheels: Stunt Track Challenge	THQ	●●●◖	89
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	**Vivendi Universal**	**●●●●**	**70**
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**50**
In the Groove	RedOctane	●●●◖	94
The Incredibles	THQ	●●●◖	88
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Inuyasha: The Secret of the Cursed Mask	Bandai	●	89
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**52**
Jak II	**Sony CEA**	**●●●◖**	**74**
Jak 3	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	87
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	**EA Games**	**●●●●**	**52**
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	**EA Games**	**●●●●◖**	**79**
James Bond 007: NightFire	**EA Games**	**●●●●◖**	**64**
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◖	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jimmy Neutron: Attack of the Twonkies	THQ	●●●	88
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◖	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◖	80
Juiced	THQ	●●●◖	94
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◖	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Karaoke Revolution Volume 2	Konami	●●●●◖	83
Karaoke Revolution Volume 3	Konami	●●●●◖	87
Katamari Damacy	Namco	●●●●◖	86
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◖	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
Kessen III	Koei	●●●	91
kill.switch	Namco	●●●●◖	75
⚡Killzone	Sony CEA	●●●●	87
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	50
King Arthur	Konami	●	88
King of Fighters 2000/2001	SNK Playmore	●●◖	76
King of Fighters 2002/2003	SNK Playmore	●●●●	88
King of Fighters: Maximum Impact	SNK Playmore	●●●	87
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	**Square EA**	**●●●●◖**	**61**
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◖	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kuon	Agetec	●●◖	87
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◖	76
La Pucelle: Tactics	Mastiff	●●●●	81
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◖	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◖	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◖	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◖	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◖	51
Lego Star Wars	Giant Int.	●●●●	92
Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	87
Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate Events	Activision	●●	89
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◖	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76

DON'T MISS IT

Graffiti Kingdom is the sequel to the vastly underappreciated *Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color*. Look, people, you create your own monsters! By drawing! How can you not love that? And then they turn 3D and come to life.... Ah, forget it.

14 SEQUELS NOBODY ASKED FOR

METAL GEAR SOLID

MGS2: SONS OF LIBERTY

There's no question that fans of *Metal Gear Solid* wanted a sequel. But the sequel they wanted lasted for only a few hours during the tanker portion of *MGS2.* What they didn't want was a pretty boy fighting against a trench-coat-wearing, morbidly obese man running around on roller skates and a needlessly convoluted story line that did little to advance the *MGS* story arc. To Mr. Kojima we say, "Thanks for bringing Snake back."

BLOODY ROAR

BLOODY ROAR 4

"I have an idea for a fighting game. Let's use characters that turn into animals!" The fact that this very idea was approved during an era in which *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken* were kings of the arcades is disturbing. *Bloody Roar* managed to get a nice little fan base, but the series did very little to evolve—by the time the fourth game came out, the zoo gimmick just wasn't enough to hold anyone's interest.

PITFALL

PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION

OK, *Pitfall* was cool back when entire characters and worlds could be created from a few different-colored pixels, and yes, even the series' Super Nintendo and Genesis incarnations were entertaining, but come on! Who even cares about *Pitfall* anymore? Apparently, someone at Activision does, but that's no excuse to release a weak platformer based on a game that is near and dear to the hearts of people over the age of 25.

TEKKEN

TEKKEN 4

Tekken 4 isn't necessarily a bad game, but in comparison to other games in the series, it left some fans wondering why Namco had destroyed its flagship fighter. The inclusion of enclosed arenas is a likely reason for the whole fiasco, since it seems as though they were put into the game as an afterthought. The result is an old *Tekken* fighting system that just doesn't gel very well with its new gameplay feature.

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

TMNT2: BATTLE NEXUS

The whole idea behind a sequel is to make it better than the original, except in the case of *Ninja Turtles* games. *Battle Nexus* not only was straight-up worse than the previous *TMNT* game, but it also implemented perhaps one of the worst gameplay features in the history of the universe—a shared life bar. It's sad that the original arcade game, which is included in the package, is still more fun than this mess.

DEVIL MAY CRY

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

Sweet merciful peanut butter—what did Capcom do to Dante? The loud-mouthed punk from the original game was replaced with a character who has the personality of a lint trap. Plus, all of the cool Gothic environments were torn down in favor of generic skyscrapers and monochromatic city streets. Capcom wanted the series to appeal to a broader audience—we can only hope the company never makes another decision like that again.

RESIDENT EVIL

RESIDENT EVIL 3: NEMESIS

Before *Code: Veronica X* and *Resident Evil 4*, *Resident Evil 2* was widely considered the best game in this survival-horror series, so it was natural to expect that the third game would be just as good. Or not. *Resident Evil 3* has all of the problems of the previous games, but they are compounded by a new item-creation system and the addition of a really tall zombie with a limited vocabulary who stalks you throughout the game.

ARMY MEN

EVERYTHING BUT ARMY MEN RTS

The premise behind the *Army Men* series is a good one, but 3DO just never got it right. With the exception of the real-time strategy game, most of the *Army Men* titles are just pitiful examples of how not to create an action game. It's a wonder that the series stayed around for as long as it did. Maybe its longevity was due to the car wreck syndrome—you have to look just to see exactly how bad it is.

FINAL FANTASY

FINAL FANTASY X-2

OK, remember: This is "sequels nobody asked for," not "sequels that suck." But as far as we know, everyone and their grandmother's cat-sitter were clamoring for a sequel to *FFVII*. And so instead we get *FFX-2*. While it's good, we're pretty sure no one except Square thought, "Oh, snap! A sequel in which three girls run around and change costumes to fight terror is totally what a dressed-as-Cloud-riding-a-moogle *FF* fan wants!"

SAGA SERIES

UNLIMITED SAGA

We seriously think that Akitoshi Kawazu has a really gigantic family that passes as a rabid fan base. How else could he keep on making games? Who but his loving mother would ask for another helping of budget graphics, bizarre "board game" aesthetics, nonsensical story lines, and a combat system that systematically combines crap with incompetence? Yet, Kawazu marches on and makes even more games.

CRIMSON SEA

CRIMSON SEA 2

This is a fine game, but it's also the best example of this article's title. The first game never came out on the PS2; it was an Xbox exclusive. Somehow, some anonymous Japanese marketing wunderkind decided, "How about we put this sequel that nobody has heard of on the PS2 instead?" We're glad that the Zen conundrum of "Can a game be a sequel if there was no prequel" has finally been answered. Thanks, Mr. Koei!

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS

ROTTK X

There's a limit to how many games dedicated to rice-paddy funding and ancient Chinese warfare we can take. With *Romance IX*, the peak was hit. The graphics are serviceable, the menus are still abundant, and the Chinese nobility are still fickle about their gifts and brotherly loyalty. Someday, when the sky is filled with mushroom clouds and we all use next-generation consoles as a postapocalyptic currency, Koei will release *ROTTK MMV*.

CRASH

CRASH TWINSANITY

Yes, some dude blessed our world with an awesome vision of Crash working with a cross-dressing Dr. Neo Cortex to fight bird-headed twins from the 10th dimension. This suspiciously sounds like the rejected Jerry Lewis pilot "Hey Lady, We're Twins Sharing a Brain!" but you know the French can't resist bizarre humor. Crash has peaked, and any new sequel is akin to seeing him sign pictures at the local Orange Julius for $2.50 a pop.

TOMB RAIDER

TOMB RAIDER III AND BEYOND

Tomb Raider was fun, the first two times. Then the franchise quickly spiraled into fiery pits of hellish craptacularism. Fewer tombs to raid and more bizarre Parisian high jinks and prison flashbacks were combined with the clumsy progeny of control-scheme inbreeding. And though we like mammaries of all kinds, real or fake, the fact that Lara's keep changing size shows where her priorities were abruptly mishandled.

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